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MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.

MEMOIRS

OF

MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR

BY

N. N. GHOSE,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER AT-LAW; ADVOCATE, HIGH COURT, CALCUTTA; FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA;

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TO

The Hon'ble H. J. S. COTTON, C.S.I.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED AS
A TOKEN OF ESTEEM
BY HIS FRIEND
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It was at the request of Raja Binaya Krishna, a descendant of Maharaja Nubkissen's, that I undertook to write this book. The materials were obtained by the efforts and at the expense of the Raja, and he has also borne the cost of printing and publication.

The Hon'ble Sir John Woodburn, as Member in charge of the Home Department of the Government of India, gave permission to search the old records in the Library of his Office. Mr. (now, Sir William) Cuningham, Secretary to the Foreign Department, gave, at the request of the Hon'ble Sir A. E. Miller, access to the records in the Library of his Office. The Hon'ble Mr. H. J. S. Cotton allowed a search in the records of the Bengal Office. Messrs. Grimley, Bolton and N. K. Bose granted permission to search the papers in the office of the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces. Raja Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur offered help by lending papers and books from his library. Dr. Murison rendered valuable services by supplying copies of papers that he found by a diligent search in the British Museum and the Library of the India Office. To the memory of Raja Rajendra Narayan and Mr. N. K. Bose a grateful tribute is offered; and Raja Binaya Krishna and myself tender our warmest acknowledgments to the other gentlemen for the help they have given.

For all opinions expressed in the book and for defects of style and arrangement none is responsible except myself. No portion of the work has been touched by any hand but mine.

In the spelling of Indian names I have followed the custom of leading English writers and not any principles of transliteration. The subject of these Memoirs appears to have been in the habit of signing his name as "Nubkissen." In contemporary documents he is generally referred to as Nubkissen, Nobkissen or Nobokissen. There is high authority also for writing "Nuncomar."

The Index has been compiled by my son-in-law, Ashu Tosh Deb, M.A.

N. N. GHOSE.

THE "INDIAN NATION" OFFICE,
Calcutta, September 25, 1901.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MAHARAJAH NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.

CHAPTER I.

Ancestry and Time and Place of Birth.

If it is true that the world does not know its greatest men, it is true no less that men do not invariably know their best friends or their greatest benefactors. It is probably as true now as it was in the days of Macaulay that scarcely "one in ten, even among English gentlemen of highly cultivated minds, can tell who won the battle of Buxar, who perpetrated the massacres of Patna, whether Sujah Dowlah ruled in Oude or in Travancore, or whether Holkar was a Hindu or a Mussulman Prince." The great Reviewer regretted that the ordinary Englishman was so little "curious to know how a handful of his countrymen, separated from their home by an immense ocean, subjugated in the course of a few years, one of the greatest empires in the world." There is little reason to wonder, therefore, that Englishmen have even less information and curiosity about those silent and secret, because quiet and unambitious workers, especially if they are of another complexion and denizens of another clime, who furnished the ideas and suggested the steps that led to the establishment of England's great empire in the east. If they know so little of the achievements of Clive and Hastings, what can they know of the counsels of Nubkissen,—the plans he made, the information he gave, the protection he rendered, the dangers he braved or warned

against, the light he threw on the designs of Mahomedan rulers, the intricacies he unravelled, the peace he maintained, the possibilities of empire that he saw and revealed to a body of merchants, bold and adventurous no doubt, but apparently not yet alive to the grandeur of the prospect before them? The formal Histories are as a rule silent about Nubkissen, or else they retail trivial gossip. Governor Verelst, an unimpeachable authority on the affairs of his own times, does justice in a general way to Nubkissen's services.

"Nubkissen is a Native Hindu who had been extremely zealous in the English cause during the troubles preceding Meer Jaffer's elevation to the Subahdaree. When the war broke out with Meer Cossim, he attended Major Adams and continued with that commander till the Subahdar was driven out of the Provinces. His address and attachment to the English recommended him to Lord Clive, who made him Banian to the Committee, in which he continued three years, likewise of Mr. Verelst's career."

And Lord Thurlow referred to him in the following terms, addressing the House of Lords during the trial of Warren Hastings:

"Nubkissen was the Persian preceptor of Mr. Hastings so far back as the year 1750, when they were both young men, and that he was indebted for his elevation, his present high rank and great fortune, solely to his early connection with Mr. Hastings, during whose administration he only stood inferior in point of emoluments or political consequence to Mahomed Reza Cawn."

Unfortunately, historians have not thought fit to indicate the specific character of his services or to show the nature and sources of his "political consequence." Mill makes no reference to him; Orme does not mention him; his name is absent from the pages of Sir John Malcolm. An acute observer of Indian life has said with truth:

"As Europeans have ever received credit for work really done by natives, it is more than probable that many diplomatic results which go by others' name were really attained by Navakrishna."

It is scarcely possible for a writer to-day, especially where he has little opportunity of access to old and official records,

to supply the gap which historians have left. But if he cannot unearth political facts buried in ancient and possibly secret records, he may dissipate some at least of the fictions that time and authority have come to associate with a great name. He may also throw some light on the social and personal history of a distinguished historic character. The attempt that is made in these pages has no other than the modest purpose of piecing together the available facts, political and private, of Maharajah Nubkissen's career, of calling attention to the sort of evidence on which certain current ideas in regard to his work and character depend, and of presenting a sketch of the man and his times, which shall be, as far as distance of time and the changed lights and shadows of society will allow, real and faithful.

As regards the ancestry of Nubkissen, the one original document that it is possible to discover is a manuscript entitled "An Account of the late Maharajah Nubkissen Bahadoor, required by and delivered to A. Stirling, Esq., Persian Secretary to Government, on the 30th April 1825." This was written either by Raja Sir Radhakanta Deva Bahadur, K.C.S.I., or by some other person or persons at his instance and under his guidance. It is obviously based on family tradition; possibly it embodies also the traditional gossip of society. How much of it is absolute historical truth it is difficult to say, but there is no reason to reject it except where it is manifestly improbable, self-contradictory, or in conflict with ascertained facts. It is certainly the basis of as much as relates to Maharajah Nubkissen in the *Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadoor, with some Notices of his Ancestors, by the Editors of the Raja's Sabdakalpadruma* (1859). In this country family history is most generally preseved in the form of tradition; and ordinarily such legends are reliable. A man transmits to his son the story of the family just as he learnt it from his father. Any errors that he may deliberately

or carelessly commit are liable to be corrected by the elders of his society, for a man's family history is often known to many persons besides himself. This *Account* is the earliest record of the origin of the family of the Sovabazar Rajas. It has all the appearance of a carefully ascertained and honestly accepted narrative; and it must be presumed to have been prepared with a due sense of responsibility as it had to be delivered to Government in response to a requisition. Thirty-four years after its submission to Government, the editors of the *Sabdakalpadruma*—an encyclopædia of Sanskrit learning—took the responsibility of publishing the *Rapid Sketch*, which, for its notice of Nubkissen, was wholly indebted to the *Account*.

The "founder" of the family, in the sense in which that word is understood by the *ghatakas*—genealogists or heralds,—that is, the earliest member of it who received a definite social recognition, was Srihari Deva, the twenty-fourth in ascent from Nubkissen. He was settled in a village named Kánsoná near Moorshedabad. Several of his descendants came to be men of wealth and position, but it is not necessary here to mention any of them until we come to Devidas Mujmooadar, eighteenth in descent, who was appointed Kanungoe of Pergunna Mooragacha, in the district of 24-Pergunnas, where he came to reside. Rukmini Kanta, one of the sons of Devidas, settled in Panchagram, and was appointed by Mahabat Jung, Nawab of Moorshedabad, manager of the estate of Keshub Ram Ray Chaudhuri, the minor Zemindar of Pergunna Mooragacha. Rukmini Kanta Vyavaharta, for so he was called, was succeeded in the management of the estate by his eldest son Rameswara. Ramchurn, the second son of Rameswara, proceeded to Moorshedabad, introduced himself to the Roy-Royan Chain Roy, and offered to increase the revenue of Pergunna Mooragacha to Rs. 50,000. He was appointed *Oludadar*, or Revenue farmer, for that pergunna. He quitted his abode in

Pergunna Mooragacha and built a house at Govindpore in Calcutta, where, having left his family, he proceeded to Moorshedabad and presented himself to Nawab Mahabat Jung and the Roy-Royan. He was appointed Salt Agent and Collector of Hijli, Tumlook, Mahishadul, and some other places. He appears to have acquitted himself with great credit, for the Nawab afterwards appointed him Dewan of the Province of Cuttack. The Subahdar of the Province, Maniruddin Khan, and Dewan Ram Churn, were sent by the Nawab with a considerable force to oppose a Mahratta incursion. On their way from Midnapore to Cuttack they were caught at a disadvantage, and the Dewan, though he fought bravely, at last fell overpowered. Dewan Ram Churn left three infant sons, says the *Account;* and his property was lost to the family by the death of Fakhar Tojjar, a wealthy merchant of Hughly, in whose custody it had been kept.

Nubkissen was the youngest of the three sons. They could not all have been literally infants at the time of their father's death, but they must all have been young, and Nubkissen was in all probability an infant. His eldest brother was Ram Sunder, and his next elder was Manick Chunder. Dewan Ram Churn had not probably had time to acquire any landed property. He had built only a house in Calcutta, and as he had separated from his relatives and was living in Calcutta only with his wife and little children, whom again he had to leave whenever he had to proceed on business, it is very likely that he had left his personal estate with one or more friends whom he trusted. And that estate was liable to be lost to the family either by the death of any of those friends, or by his own death. A trust of which no living person was aware might be betrayed with impunity. Ram Churn's widow, who, according to a certain tradition, came from the family of the Boses of Sarisa, appears to have had some little property in her possession with which she was able to maintain and educate her children and to build a new

house in Govindpore, her former residence having been encroached on by the river. When Ram Sunder became fit for business he at first did the duties of Ameen or Supervisor of Punchcote, commonly called Puchet, and some other places, and supported his family (which is to be understood in a Hindu sense) for some years.

The place of Nubkissen's birth is uncertain. It is not possible to ascertain whether he was born at Mooragacha and was a member of "the family" that was left in the house in Calcutta when his father proceeded to Moorshedabad, or he was born in that house itself after the family had migrated there. Govindpore, it may be added, was the site of the present Fort William, the lines of which were traced by Clive in 1758. The probability is that as Ram Churn held his two last appointments after his removal to Govindpore, the youngest of his "infant sons" was born there. The appointments too could not have been held for any length of time. If Nubkissen was actually born at Govindpore there is a fitness in the decree of destiny that reared a bulwark of England's empire in the east on the very soil that received the child that was eventually to help in laying the foundations of that empire. What a discovery it would be that would identify the place of Nubkissen's birth as the very spot where the corner-stone of the Fort was laid!

The date of Nubkissen's birth is even more uncertain than the place. The *Account* describes him as "a youth attending school" in 1756 when he is said to have been appointed Munshi to the East India Company. The *Rapid Sketch* represents him in more precise terms as a "youth of 16" in that year. These statements have to be rejected, for one fact which stands on high authority and is least open to question is that Nubkissen was the Persian preceptor of Mr. Hastings as far back as 1750 when he must have left school and could not certainly be a boy of

ten. Lord Chancellor Thurlow was, in the language of Macaulay, "the most conspicuous champion of Warren Hastings." It cannot be presumed that the veteran lawyer spoke without book. The statement as to Nubkissen must have been part of his instructions which in the last resort had come from Hastings himself. In view of this well attested fact, the supposition that Nubkissen was born in 1740 cannot be entertained. When was he born then? It is impossible to say. A writer in a Calcutta magazine "assumed" that he was born about the year 1732. The same date is given, upon grounds that are not stated, by a writer in the *Hindoo Patriot* newspaper,[1] who wrote probably at the bidding or under the supervision of the well-known scholar and antiquarian, Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra. Let the year of Nubkissen's birth then be assumed to be 1732, the year in which Warren Hastings saw the light. George II had then reigned for five years; the East India Company, whose Charter had been renewed two years before and who now for the first time began to make up annual accounts, was a body of merchants with no political power or ambition; Clive (born September 29, 1725) was a rowdy boy of seven at Hope Hall.

[1] Oct. 31, 1887.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE—SERVICES TO THE COMPANY, 1750-1757.

THE first event in Nubkissen's life, of which anything is known, is his appointment as Persian tutor to Warren Hastings. On the 8th of October 1750, eight young men for the Civil Service arrived at Calcutta. Warren Hastings was one of them, and shortly after his arrival, before the close of the year, his tutor was appointed. The writer of a trenchant critique on the *Rapid Sketch*, who refuses to believe any fact not recorded in any published history by a European or a Mahomedan writer, gives himself the liberty to speculate on the way in which Nubkissen got his first appointment. Nubkissen, he tells us, was waiting for a vessel to arrive, and as soon as the eight young men landed in Calcutta, the expectant Bengalee youth was retained as a tutor for Hastings. His account is circumstantial :—

"While he was yet within his teens, his father probably died, and he was reared up with his other (!) brothers by his needy mother. He picked up some knowledge of the Persian, then the fashionable study and the Court language, in his village, which he greatly increased by self-culture. The English settlement at Chutanutty was the nearest town. As he began to grow up towards manhood and as the responsibilities of life began daily to press upon him, he no doubt used to repair to it often in quest of employment from its many native merchants and *shakibs*. In those days, when ships visited Bengal at long intervals, the arrival of one from Europe was anxiously expected by numerous people. Some of the Company's servants expected promotion, others feared degradation. Young cadets, who had ruined themselves by pillaws and harems, expected a dull letter from their parents, which they were sure not to read, and a—remittance. Native Banians, who had successively equipped newly arrived Europeans, expected fresh batches. Without any definite expectation Navakrishna, with the imagination of an youthful Oriental, could hardly have failed, as he remarked these vessels come one by one, to picture to himself that in one of these was to come the *shakib* who

was destined to make his fortune. If he did indulge in such a fancy he was not deceived."

If the writer was a youthful Oriental at the time he reviewed the *Rapid Sketch*, his imagination beats even Nubkissen's. In the absence of an account with any pretensions to authenticity, the safest course is to be silent with regard to the occasion and causes of the appointment.

Nubkissen's next appointment was that of Moonshee to the East India Company. The circumstances of this appointment, as given in the *Account*, are definite enough. In consequence of the tyrannical conduct of Nabob Serajuddowlah, Raja Rajbullabha (who was a Vaidya by caste, of Dacca) fled from Moorshedabad and took refuge at Calcutta. The Nabob issued a perwannah to Mr. Drake, then Governor of Calcutta, directing him to seize and send the Raja to him. Mr. Drake refused to seize and send him, and stated that if the Nabob had any demands against him, he would make the Raja pay immediately on being informed of the particulars. The Nabob, incensed at this answer, addressed to him another perwannah threatening him that if he did not forthwith deliver up the Raja he would send his troops to seize the Raja and drive the English out of Bengal. Mr. Drake, who had not sufficient force to repel an attack, was thrown into perplexity, but Raja Rajbullabha assured him of the sympathy of the Sirdars, with whom evidently he had been in communication. The Ministers and Sirdars of the Nabob, or at least several of them, joined together and sent a Persian letter from Moorshedabad to Mr. Drake by a messenger, who delivered it to Mr. Drake with the instruction that it was a letter which contained important secrets and should not be placed in the hands of a Mahomedan, but must be read and explained by a Hindu. Mr. Drake, without showing that letter to the Company's Moonshee, Tajuddin, ordered his men to look for a Hindu Moonshee. On that day Nubkissen had gone to Burrabazar in Calcutta, when one of Mr. Drake's

men ascertaining that he was acquainted with the Persian language took him to Mr. Drake. Nubkissen read and explained the letter, and wrote out, under instructions of course, an answer to it. He acquitted himself so well, that the Government being pleased with him appointed him to the office of Moonshee of the East India Company, and granted him a palankeen with bearers for his conveyance and 200 rupees for his outfit.

There is nothing improbable in this account, and having regard to the quarter from which it comes it may very well be accepted. Nubkissen became Moonshee of the East India Company in 1756. He had already been for six years Persian tutor to Mr. Warren Hastings; and it is probable that Mr. Drake required his services as interpreter of the letter after he had ascertained the fact of his being a trusted employé of Hastings. That Nubkissen should have been in Burrabazar just at the time when Drake's men were looking for a Hindu of his qualifications and should have been invited to accompany them to their master, may seem, from a certain point of view, extraordinary. But it has to be remembered that accidents do happen, and have often been the making of great men. The combination of circumstances was, to the anxious youth, no doubt accidental, or, more truly, providential, but there was really nothing extraordinary in the fact that he was in a particular place at a particular time and happened to meet particular men. What to Nubkissen was a lucky accident, happened in the ordinary course of things and had nothing of a sudden or surprising character in it. There is no doubt that Nubkissen did become the Moonshee of the East India Company. He was Moonshee also to Hastings, and afterwards to Lord Clive.

Authentic history gives incidental corroboration of the circumstances, except only as regards one comparatively trivial matter of detail. We have it on the authority of Sir John Malcolm that one of the excuses which Serajuddowlah

made for a quarrel with the English was that they had given protection to one of his subjects who had fled with great treasure.

"The person the Nabob alluded to was Kishendass, the son of the late Dewan [Raja Rajbullabha] of the Nabob of Dacca, who visited Calcutta on his way to Juggernath; and as he was strongly recommended to Mr. Drake, the President of Calcutta, by Mr. Watts, the Chief of Cossimbazar, on account of services rendered by his family to the Company, he was treated with kindness and attention."[1]

The person of this subject, the Nabob was informed, should be reserved for his pleasure; and proof was offered that the treasure he was supposed to have fled with had no existence. There is other evidence to show that it was not Raja Rajbullabha but his son that took refuge in Calcutta.

Orme gives a detailed account of the circumstances which Serajuddowlah wanted to make out as constituting a *causa belli*.

"A Gentoo, named Rajabullub, had succeeded Hossein Cooley Khan in the post of Duan or Prime Minister to Newagis [Governor of Dacca] . . . doubtful of the event of the impending contest he determined to place his family and treasures out of the reach of danger; and not deeming them in safety at Dacca, where they had remained for some time, he ordered his son Kissendass to remove them from that city, under pretence of going a pilgrimage to the Pagoda of Juggernath, on the coast of Orixa."[2]

Kissendass left Dacca with several loaded boats, but instead of going through the channels at the bottom of the Delta, proceeded along the Ganges to the Jelingeer river, through which he entered the Hugli. His father, who was at Moorshedabad, requested Mr. Watts, the English Chief at Cossimbazar, to secure for him protection under the presidency of Calcutta for a few days. Mr. Watts had reasons to oblige the Dewan and advised the presidency to comply with the request. His letter to the presidency on

[1] *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive* [1836], Vol. I., p. 147.

[2] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, Vol. II., Sec i., p. 49.

this subject had scarcely arrived in Calcutta before the boats of Kissendass appeared in sight. The President, Mr. Drake, was not in town, but the rest of the Council admitted Kissendass into Calcutta. The fact of the admission was soon known at Moorshedabad. It wounded the pride of Serajuddowlah and exasperated his mind.

"Surajuddowlah, immediately after the death of Allaverdy, was proclaimed, and prepared to attack the widow of Newagis Mahomed. Not more than one or two days after his accession, he wrote a letter to the President of Calcutta, ordering him to deliver up Kissendas, with his treasures." [1]

There is satisfactory evidence also of the existence of a confederacy of Serajuddowlah's officers which was in communication with the Council at Calcutta. History does not pursue to any great length the correspondence between the Nabob and Mr. Drake, but the course of events showed conclusively that Mr. Drake's answers could not have been accommodating. If then history confirms the *Account* so far, and, for the rest, is silent, there is no reason to presume against the accuracy of its narrative as a whole.

Nubkissen did good service to the Company almost from the moment of his appointment as its Moonshee. The English Government, expelled from Calcutta in 1756, was accommodated on board a schooner near the pestiferous shores of Fulta. They received, however, as the Rev. J. Long assures us, regular and important information respecting the movements at Moorshedabad through Warren Hastings, then Commercial Agent there. It is not too much to assume that Hastings's own informant was Nubkissen. The same writer gives us more direct information as to the services rendered by the invaluable Moonshee. He tells us in another passage and referring to a later date (1757), that when the English, having quitted the Fort, remained for several months on board a ship at Fulta, some of the

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 53, 54.

provisions were supplied by Nubkissen at the risk of his life, for the Nabob had prohibited, under penalty of death, any one supplying the English.[1] "This led to Warren Hastings taking Nobokissen as his Moonshee and the subsequent elevation of his family," which probably means that Nubkissen, who had so long been only Persian tutor to Hastings, came now to be trusted with higher and more responsible functions. The same writer observes elsewhere:

"Nabakissen came forward in Clive's time. Living in an obscure village, Panchgay, near Diamond Harbour, he supplied the English refugees there with provisions in spite of the prohibition of the Nabob and he brought them valuable information relating to the Nabob's movements."[2]

It is easy to see that as early as 1756, that is almost immediately after his connection with the Company, Nubkissen had definitely cast in his lot with the English. He was not merely doing the routine duties of a Moonshee and was certainly not mindful of his personal and immediate interests. He supplied material information to the Company of the Nabob's movements at Moorshedabad, and supplied provision to them at the risk of his own life at a time when their prospects were of the darkest and their power of the feeblest. He was not keeping up appearances or playing fast and loose with his masters. No loyalty to the Company could be deeper than that of Nubkissen's, for it commenced in the hour of their distress and despair. A disaster to the Company would have been death to Nubkissen, but with characteristic courage and sincerity he faced that prospect.

The *Account* describes in a somewhat circumstantial way a service rendered by Nubkissen in 1757, shortly

[1] Selections from Unpublished Records of Government. Pp. 75 and 93. The fact is stated almost in the same words in W. H. Carey's *The Good Old Days of Honourable John Company*. (Printed at the Argus Press, Simla, 1882). Vol. I., p. 41.

[2] *Peeps into Social Life in Calcutta a Century ago*. By the Rev. J. Long. p. 17.

before the battle of Plassey. Serajuddowlah carried out his threat and attacked Calcutta with a grand army in 1756. The English had only a small force and made no resistance. The Governor and many other English gentlemen went to Madras. Now was enacted the tragedy of the Black Hole. The Nabob having taken Calcutta, named it Alinagar and appointed one Raja Manick Chunder as its Governor. He then returned to Moorshedabad. Mr. Drake and the other Members of Council having arrived at Madras, brought Colonel Clive on board one of Admiral Watson's ships, who landed with his force at Fulta within six months and took the forts of Budge-Budge, Tana, Magooa and Aligar, defeated the Nabob's army and surprised Raja Manick Chunder, who was then amusing himself at *nautches*. The Raja fled to Moorshedabad and the English took possession of Calcutta in January 1757, when Nubkissen waited upon Colonel Clive and resumed his office. When Serajuddowlah made preparations for a second attack on Calcutta, he encamped in Amir Chand's garden, now called Halsibag. Colonel Clive deputed Nubkissen and an Engineer to obtain information in regard to the particulars of the Nabob's encampment under the pretence of making proposals of peace and offering presents to the Nabob. They brought with them a detailed account of the situation. Clive marched his forces up to the Nabob's camp at the end of the night and blew up his tent and those of his Sirdars by the first fire from his cannon. The Nabob, however, had already removed to another tent and he remained unhurt. Clive followed his enemy to Plassey, where a decisive battle was fought. There is nothing improbable in this story. The published histories make no reference to it, and their silence is not to be wondered at. A deputation of the sort just described and the kind of information it elicited, are not the things to be made matter of record. They are certainly not the things with regard to which, even if a record existed at some time, any

Naib Subahdar Nabob Mozufferjung, and fixed an annual Nizamut allowance at Rs. 18,00,000 and the expenses of the Subahdari at Rs. 7,00,000, making a total of 25 lakhs of rupees. He returned to Calcutta with Clive, having won his highest esteem for the faithful and efficient discharge of the public duties entrusted to him. Clive, when he shortly afterwards left for England, assured Nubkissen that he would return soon and appoint him to a distinguished situation.

Will a little digression be pardoned, if only as an illustration of the part that spies and accidents play in the issues of wars and the fortunes of men and nations? Colonel Malleson, who is one of the latest biographers of Clive and has made a thorough research into the history of his times, writes with reference to the capture of Chandernagore by the English in March 1757 :—

"If treason and corruption had not intervened, Renault [the Governor of Chandernagore] would have forced Clive to retire. But, alas! treason in the first instance had done its work, corruption had completed it in the other. . .The French Engineer who had deserted to Clive had reported that if the Admiral would carefully sound all around the sunken vessels, he would find that that there was still sufficient room [in the channel which Renault believed he had blocked up] for ships to pass the channel singly. Soundings made, during the succeeding days, under a heavy fire, proved this information to be correct."

The French Engineer, then, ruined Renault by his "treason." And it has now to be said that it was Nuncomar who betrayed the Governor by his "corruption." Renault had received from Nuncomar, Governor of Hugli for Serajuddowlah, the fullest assurances of protection, but that unscrupulous person allowed himself to be bribed by Omichund, gave no assistance to Renault and even prevented Raja Dulab Ram, one of Serajuddowlah's Generals, from coming to his rescue. This was the result of "the successful intrigues which the English had carried on with Nundkumar," who proved a less reliable friend than Serajuddowlah himself.

A Mahomedan writer, the author of a work called *Tarikh-i-Mançuri*, takes occasion to moralise on the events:—

"As the star of the English was in the ascendant, and the unavailing fortunes of the French were beginning to set, the complicated knot unravelled itself in the hands of the English. But if fortune had not favoured the English, not even exertions such as had never been witnessed in India, would have enabled Colonel Clive to take possession of Chandernagore. A French officer of the name of Terraneau, who knew the secret of the passage left in the river, was for some reasons dissatisfied with M. Renault, the then Governor of Chandernagore. Forgetting the obligation under which he lay to his own nation, he went to Colonel Clive and informed him of the existence of the passage."

It is something to be able to say of Nubkissen that in an age of perfidy and under circumstances of what may be called complete moral anarchy in public life, he had an unblemished record. Not the worst of his enemies had charged him with treason or any betrayal of trust.

It is curious to observe that while historians or chroniclers are silent as to the services of Nubkissen, at least one or two of them have thought fit to fasten on him a charge of looting a certain inner treasury of Serajuddowlah. A Mahomedan of the Shiah sect and a friend of the Nabob Nazim of Moorshedabad, Sayyid Ali, writes in the *Tarikh-i-Mançuri*:—

"After the victory [of Plassey] Colonel Clive met with Mir Mahomed Jafar. They congratulated each other and went together to Moorshedabad. On their arrival at the palace, the nobles of the city and the Government officials were called to a *durbar*. Colonel Clive took Mir Jafar's hand and led him to the Masnad. At the same time salutes were fired to indicate the transfer of the *Subahs* of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to Mir Jafar. After the *durbar*, the new Nabob, Colonel Clive, with a few Englishmen, the Dewan Ram Chand, and Nobokissen, the Colonel's Moonshee, inspected the treasury, where a sum of more than 20 millions of rupees, in silver and gold, was found.

"It is also well known that besides this treasure there existed another in the Harem, which fact Mir Mahomed Jafar concealed from Colonel Clive, at the instigation of the Dewan and Clive's Moonshee.

The value of the gold and silver articles and of the jewels found there was not less than 80 millions of rupees. The whole was divided among Mir Jafar, Ram Chand, Amir Beg and Nobokissen. This transaction is indeed very probable, as Ram Chand left a fortune of 12½ millions of rupees at his death, ten years later, whilst Nobokissen could afford to pay 9,00,000 rupees on the occasion of the death of his mother. Yet both men were in receipt of only 60 rupees per month at the time of the division." [1]

Before we consider probabilities, let us attend to some facts which historical research has disclosed. With reference to the reported wealth in the treasury of Serajuddowlah, Sir John Malcolm writes :—

"The treasures of Serajuddowlah had been greatly over estimated by Mr. Watts, who states in one letter that they were computed to amount to 40,000,000*l* sterling, a sum so extravagantly beyond what the revenues of the country could have enabled Allaverdy Khan, or his successor, to amass, that it is quite extraordinary how such a belief could have been entertained." [2]

Colonel G. B. Malleson says that the treasury contained, all told, rather less than two-thirds of twenty-two millions of rupees. [3] Ten rupees were in those days equivalent to a pound sterling.

As regards probabilities they are altogether against the story of the Mahomedan writer. It is impossible to conceive why Mir Jafar should have concealed from Clive a treasure which he was willing to share with Ram Chand, Amir Beg and Nubkissen. He had something to gain by pleasing Clive; he could have had no reason to please Nubkissen or Ram Chand, both of whom are said to have been holding humble offices, carrying a salary of 60 rupees each. That there was a secret treasury at all in the harem could have been no better known to Nubkissen than it was to Clive.

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[1] *The Journal of the Asiatic Society* (No. II. of 1867). H. Blochmann's translation of a passage from a Persian manuscript of the *Tarikh-i-Mançuri*.

[2] *Life of Clive*. Vol. I., p. 276.

[3] *Founders of the Indian Empire: Clive*. p. 274.

And from all that is known of the relations between Clive and Nubkissen, it is impossible to believe that Nubkissen could have instigated the concealment. Besides, it would have been a desperate thing for Mir Jafar to have taken three men into confidence in regard to a matter which he chose to keep a secret as against Clive, especially when the "united claims" of several parties "including those of Clive himself" could not be met from the regular treasury. The Mahomedan writer who retails the scandal gives circumstantial details which would seem to suggest as if he was an eye-witness of the division of the spoil, and the wonder is that anybody should have known a fact of this kind, of which Clive was not aware. There is nothing, in the next place, to show that Nubkissen spent nine lakhs of rupees on his mother's *Sraddha*, or what particular amount he did spend on that ceremony. There will be occasion in a subsequent chapter to consider the subject of the *Sraddha* at some length. It is enough to state here that the supposition of Nubkissen having spent nine lakhs on the ceremony, though he lived on an income of Rs. 60 per mensem, has been given currency by only one English writer, the Rev. J. C. Marshman. He made the statement in a little school-book called the *History of Bengal*. The Mahomedan writer that has been here cited is little known at the present day, though probably he is Mr. Marshman's only authority. There were suspicions prevalent amongst Nubkissen's contemporaries, especially those who were jealous of his wealth and influence. Nubkissen himself by his frank statements and bold challenges silenced the tongue of calumny in his lifetime; but fictions die hard, and it is no wonder the old insinuations are still sometimes indulged in. In a petition, which will hereafter be quoted in full, Nubkissen says:—

"My enemies have in vain searched for proofs that I raised my fortune by bribery and undue means in hopes that by such a discovery they might have been able to have ruined my character and reputation. Disappointed in this their efforts are now extended to

more base and villanous ends. My life is now what they thirst after."

Nubkissen's salary at this time was, as has already been shown, much more than 60 rupees per mensem. As Moonshee of the Company he would be entitled to donations like his masters, and such donations, historians tell us, were a legitimate income in those days. Before his mother's death, as will be presently shown, many other sources of income had opened out to him. It has to be remembered that Nubkissen was a man of great ability and accomplishments and might be able to earn money in various ways. He could draft petitions, give legal and political advice, manage estates, act as interpreter, do business as an agent, and render various kinds of assistance to men, literary and practical, for which he could very well claim remuneration. To suppose that such a man, so talented, so versatile, so energetic, would be tied down to his salary as Moonshee and would have no additional source of income, is to exhibit absolute ignorance of life. How much would it have been possible for him to earn only as a conveyancer or an attorney! And he was a great deal besides and no mere clerk. The Rev. Mr. Long writes :—

"Persian was the language of diplomacy and the courts. In it the English transacted business both with the natives and Armenians. Through his skill in it Nabakissen from being Clive's Munshi in 1760 rose to great influence and wealth."[1]

Nubkissen had been Clive's Moonshee even before 1760, but it is perfectly fair to suppose that his knowledge of Persian, coupled of course with his ability, was the main cause of his wealth and influence, just as knowledge of English has been the cause of many a Bengali's advancement in more recent times. The scandal, however, is not without its moral. It is a recognition of the importance which Nubkissen had acquired by this time and of the services he

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[1] *Peeps into Social Life*. p. 18.

had already rendered to the Company. It was probably presumed in the gossip of the day that a man who was of so much service to the conquerors could not but have received a material share of the spoil. But having regard to ascertained facts as well as to probabilities, the story of Nubkissen receiving a share of the treasures stored up in the harem must be dismissed as at best an unfounded presumption.

CHAPTER III.

From the Battle of Plassey to Clive's Final Departure from India, 1757-1767.

Clive left for England on the 25th February 1759 ; he returned to Calcutta on the 3rd May 1765 ; he finally bade adieu to the country in 1767, sailing from Calcutta on the 29th January. What was the net result of his work in the first period of his career in Bengal, namely, from December 1756 to February 1757 ? It was, in a word, the removal of all danger to which the English settlement might be exposed. As Colonel Malleson puts it—

"He had determined not to leave Bengal so long as there should remain any danger threatening the English settlement. With the destruction of the last of its European rivals [namely, the Dutch] all danger had disappeared."

The work, therefore, was a wholly defensive one. One hears up to this period, not of English possessions, power or supremacy, but only of the "English settlement," and the safety of that settlement is the greatest work that could be accomplished. What is the work, however, which Clive had done when he finally left the country in 1767 ? He had laid the foundations of an empire. In the words of Colonel Malleson—

"Clive felt in January 1767 that he might retire with honour from the country which he had won for England, and on whose soil there now remained for him no new fields to conquer ..... The Calcutta which he saw for the last time on that eventful day [the day of departure] had in ten years been transformed by him from the *status* of a conquered seat of a ruined commercial agency, occupied by the conqueror, into the flourishing capital of a possession as large as France. Alone he had done it !"

His genius, military, administrative and diplomatic, had, of course, done it, but how is one to account for his change

of policy and aspiration during the second period of his career in Bengal? The historian just quoted says that before his arrival in 1765 Clive had nurtured a scheme for the welding together and the protection of the territories acquired by the British. No evidence is offered, however, for such a conclusion, nor are any circumstances mentioned which might raise any presumption in its favour. There are reasons to believe that the inspiration of empire came from Nubkissen, who practically discharged all the functions of a diplomatic minister, of a Foreign Secretary, and of the Chief Officer of an Intelligence Department.

Nubkissen's chief qualifications for the advice and assistance he gave to Clive were his knowledge of Persian, his knowledge of the country and his knowledge of the temper of the princes and the people of the time. Mr. Richard Barwell in the course of his statement in the trial of Warren Hastings said:—"He [Nubkissen] is profoundly learned in Persian and most of the customs of the Mahomedans are based on the Persian scriptures; besides Raja *Navakrishna* was a man of vast experience and his repeated intercourse with the Nabobs of Moorshedabad has made him quite a competent man." Governor Johnstone in his explanation to the Select Committee said that Nubkissen was, like a few others, an "able conveyancer," that is, one well versed in the art of drafting treaties. Evidence of a direct kind as to the services rendered by Nubkissen is to be found in a petition addressed by him to the Council of Revenue, Bengal, and dated the 18th November 1777.[1] The petition runs as follows:—

From the year 1756 to the year 1767, an interval during which the welfare and interests of the Hon'ble Company were repeatedly in the most critical and dangerous situations, it is a well known fact that all the most important and secret negotiations and transactions with the Country Powers were conducted through the medium of your

[1] See proceedings of the Council of Revenue, dated Fort William, the 18th November 1777,

petitioner, the success of which he humbly hopes sufficiently marks his fidelity. The particulars of those services are too recent and well known to your Hon'ble Board to need recapitulation here. Your petitioner therefore only craves leave briefly to state a few of the most material heads thereof: *viz.*—

1. His services under the Right Hon'ble Lord Clive (then Colonel Clive) in the Revolution which happened in consequence of the capture of Calcutta and subsequent defeat of Serajuddowlah, on which occasion your petitioner acted as Persian Secretary and Translator, and was employed in all the most confidential transactions.

2. His services under Major Adams, Commander-in-Chief in the wars of the Nabob Kassimally Cawn, in which your petitioner had the sole management of all such negotiations and transactions with the Country Powers and chief people as fell under the province of the Commander-in-Chief.

3. His services under Lord Clive on his return to India in the year 1764 when your petitioner was the only native entrusted or employed in all the several Treaties which were made with the Mogul or King Shaw Alum, the late Vizier Shuja-ud-Dowla, the Nabob of Bengal Nudjum-ud-Dowla, etc., when the grant of the Dewani was obtained for the Hon'ble Company.

Lastly.—For the sense which Lord Clive had of your petitioner's services on the occasions aforesaid he begs leave to refer your Hon'ble Board to the proceedings of the Select Committee of the 16th January 1767 and the proceedings in public $\frac{6}{y}$ Public Department in Council, the next day, wherein his Lordship is pleased fully to express the sense he entertained of your petitioner's fidelity and abilities and of his steady attachment to the interests of the Hon'ble Company.

There is no doubt that Clive appreciated Nubkissen's services, which were not only political, but personal. Lady Clive wrote to him, years afterwards, the following note :—

The kind attentions shewn to Robert May by the worthy Raja Nobokissen Bahadur have very much obliged Lady Clive, the late Lord Clive's wife. She now, his widow, has an inclination to send Nobokissen a valuable print of her dear late Lord, flattering herself that such a proof of her regard will be very acceptable to him. It is still in his power to give her further proofs of his friendship by

shewing her cousins, Mr. Henry and Mr. Edward Strachey every civility in Bengal. The children of the late Lord Clive wish happiness to Nobokissen.

MAHARAJA NOBOKISSEN BAHADUR,

BY MR. EDWARD STRACHEY. *Bengal.*

Mr. Henry Strachey referred to in this letter introduced his son to Nubkissen in the following terms.

LONDON, *7th April 1792.*

DEAR NABAKISSEN—

My eldest son brings you this letter. He is appointed a writer and I hope he will be an honest and a good man. As I was so well acquainted with you when I was with Lord Clive, you would think me unkind if I did not introduce my son to you. If you can ever be of use to him I am sure you will. I shall always be glad to hear of your health and welfare, being

Your Friend,

FOR RAJA NABAKISSEN. (Sd.) HENRY STRACHEY.

The letter which Mr. John Knott wrote to him in 1774 shows very clearly the esteem in which Nubkissen was held and indicates the sort of services which he had rendered and was capable of rendering.

London, 29th March 1774.

To

RAJA NOBKISSEN,

MR. NOBKISSEN,

Though I have not received a letter from you, nor any particular advice of you from my friends in Calcutta since I left Bengal, yet you have always had my good wishes for your health and happiness.

The Europe ships that went to Bengal last season would inform you of the violent disputes that we have lately had in Parliament and at the East India House here against almost every gentleman that has returned from Bengal for some years past. Lord Clive has been more particularly attacked and abused by Mr. Johnson's Scotch friends and their partizans, and they even carried matters so far as to endeavour to take away His Lordship's whole fortune. Cruel and scandalous as such endeavours were, these outrageous men were happily disappointed, partly by the very sensible and spirited speeches which Lord Clive made in Parliament in his own

defence and partly by the support of his many active and able friends in that House. His Lordship enjoying but an indifferent state of health every cold season here (which is rather too severe for his constitution, as well as for most gentlemen that come from India) he went to Italy for the benefit of his health about five or six months ago, which is a warmer and healthier climate than England; and Mr. Strachey tells me that his Lordship's health i now so much benefited by his journey, that he will very soon return to England again. Mr. Kelsall and Mr. Beaumont, late of Bengal, accompanied His Lordship to Italy. Lady Clive and all his Lordship's family are well; he has two sons and three daughters, I believe, who are all very fine children.

Mr. Strachey was married, soon after his return to England, to Mr. Kelsall's sister and has one or two children by her; he is in good health and lives very happily; he is a Member of Parliament and will be chosen one of the East India Directors, I believe, next year. Dr. Ingham died soon after his return to England. Mr. Verelst was married to a very handsome young lady of good family and large fortune about a year after his return to England; he has two children by his wife and would be very happy could he enjoy his health perfectly in this climate. He will be in the Direction again, I believe, next year, as also Mr. Becher. I was married about the same time that Mr. Verelst was, to a sister of my cousin, Captain George Knott's, whom you must remember in Bengal. I have but one child, my wife being of a tender and weakly constitution. I should be very happy in England, was not my little fortune exposed to so heavy a risk in Bengal by the share I hold in the joint concern in trade there under the direction of the late Mr. Hoissard. Though you were so kind as to buy that share of me, so far as related to my proportion of any profits that might arise on the joint concern, yet I am still responsible for the principal amount of my share of that original stock.

Both Hoissard and Gocul Gosaul have behaved in a most encouraging manner to the other proprietors of that concern by settling and interchanging a private account between themselves wherein they have endeavoured to deprive the joint concern of nearly the sum of two lakhs of rupees by the manner they have settled that account, and which sum (with about two lakhs more) Gocul owed to the concern partly for their goods bought by him of Hoissard as acting agent to the concern (which consulted me upon and had my

approval (?) of one of the principal proprietors a little before I left Bengal) and partly for the concern's outstanding debts at the Aurungs, which a letter of Mr. Hoissard's to me tells me Gocul (as banyan to the concern) had given him a written obligation to be responsible to the concern for the full payment of. I know very well that Gocul, long before we left Bengal, lent several large sums of money to Mr. Hoissard (amounting altogether to nearly two lakhs of rupees) for that gentleman's private use and benefit in trade. And this I understand is the money which they transferred in the private account settled between themselves as above mentioned, instead of Gocul paying to the joint concern the full amount of the debt he owed thereto or continuing to be responsible to it for the same till he could pay that debt, and acquainting Mr. Verelst's attorneys and mine in Calcutta with the transaction when proposed by Hoissard. Whatever sums of money Gocul had lent to Mr. Hoissard for his own private use and advantage in trade long before that time, Gocul must be sensible it was very unreasonable and unjust to expect that the property of the joint concern should pay him for this private debt. I am astonished to hear that Gocul is capable of such a conduct, even as much so as to hear that Mr. Hoissard could be guilty of it. If the law suit in the Mayor's Court at Calcutta between the Executors of Hoissard's Estate and Gocul Ghosal be determined in Gocul's favor, I hope, Mr. Nobokissen, from the many testimonies I have received of your friendship that you will not think it unreasonable in me if I request your becoming my security for what the Mayor's Court, or Mahomed Reza Cawn (who you know lent three lakhs of Sicca rupees to the joint concern for its first establishment) may demand of the several proprietors for their shares in the concern and consequently of me for my proportion thereof. If you are willing to favor me in this request I shall be obliged if you will be so kind as to call upon Mr. Levett, my acting Attorney in Calcutta, and acquaint him with it. The risk I am exposed to upon this occasion becomes daily so very alarming to me, that I am determined to return to Bengal next season to endeavour if possible to repair the loss. I should have sailed this year, but could not get my concerns in England sufficiently adjusted to enable me to go away. I hope I shall see you in Bengal next summer cheerful and well.

You will be advised long before this reaches you of great changes here in East India affairs, of the appointment of a Governor-General and

four Supreme Councillors to superintend and regulate the Company's affairs at all their settlements in India, and of four Judges to establish a Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal. Amongst these Judges, and the second in rank, is Robert Chambers, Esq., a gentleman of respectable character and distinguished abilities ; upon mentioning to me one day his having a desire to learn both the Persian and Bengalee languages on his arrival in Bengal, and that he wished he could meet with a person there properly qualified to instruct him, I immediately mentioned your name and added, that as you had had almost the sole direction of Lord Clive's Persian correspondence and a great part also of Mr. Verelst's, and acted as Political Banyan to them both whilst they were Governors of Bengal, I thought no man was fitter to answer his expectations in regard to those languages than yourself, if you were willing to undertake it. Besides, I told him the great advantage your conversation would be to him upon the general politics of Hindustan, as well as the particular provinces thereof from the long and intimate knowledge you have had on those subjects. Mr. Chambers will necessarily want a Banyan when he arrives in Calcutta ; from the character I have given him of you, I hope he will not think of engaging any one else, and though you are much better experienced in politics than in trade, yet as I suppose Mr. Chambers will not trade much, if any from your good sense and general knowledge of the country and with the assistance of my old friend Narry Hurry (who I hope is alive and well, and who understands accounts exceedingly well,) you cannot be at any loss to fulfil Mr. Chambers' expectation in those matters. But my chief motive in recommending you to Mr. Chambers is that his protection and friendship may be serviceable to you ; and as he is a very sensible and worthy gentleman and may probably very soon become the first Judge in Calcutta, I hope you will find his service answer your expectations, and I shall be happy to have had it in my power to have been in any degree assisting to you on the occasion. Mr. Chambers was lately married here to a very beautiful and accomplished young lady, who accompanies him to India. As Mr. Chambers desired me to give him a letter to you, I send this under his care and hope you will wait upon him as soon after your receipt of it as possible.

Wishing you health and success.

I am,
MR. NOBKISSEN.
Your sincere friend,
(Sd.) JOHN KNOTT.

Some idea, though only a very meagre one, of the sort of work which Nubkissen used to do for Clive may be formed from the three following short letters : —

Persian Department, Letters written 1764, No. 212.

Dated 18th December 1764.

From

R. CLIVE.

To

THE NABOB.

Your Excellency's letter from Mortagill reached me in a fortunate hour, and the news of your welfare gave me more pleasure than I can express. May it please God to preserve you and your family in health and prosperity and always let me hear of it. Nobkissen Munshee has informed me of all other particulars with which I am satisfied and to whom I refer you.

Persian Department., Letters written 1764, No. 213.

Dated 22nd December 1764.

From

R. CLIVE.

To

THE NABOB.

You advise me you have safely arrived in Muxadabad than which news nothing could be more agreeable to me. May you always there be happy and rejoice me in the news of it.

In another letter you advise me of the mad proceedings of Shahmull. Sensible of the ill-consequence thereof and to shew my readiness to oblige your Excellency in everything I consistently can, I immediately wrote and sent to you by the hands of Nobkissen Munshee a letter to Major Munro, which I am persuaded will set these matters right. If not I shall take other measures.

You please me much in the last letter wherein you mention that Maharajah Nundo Comar was set down to and attending to the accounts. The speedy adjustment of them will, I hope, soon enable your Excellency to answer all your purposes ; it is in attention only to those points that can make these provinces flourish and yourself happy. That you may be always so is my sincere wish. I am well and hope always to have accounts of your welfare.

Persian Department, Letters written 1765, No. 7.

From

R. CLIVE.

To

THE NABOB.

I have received your Excellency's letters which always give me etc.

As to the Batty on the rupees paid at Patna in consequence of your order, I understood, as did the Board, they should be sicca rupees, but I have desired Mr. Billers not to dispute about this there, but leave this matter to be settled between your Excellency and us here. It gives me pleasure to hear from your Excellency that you look upon Reza Khan in so favourable a light. We look upon him as well inclined to you, or he would not have had any countenance from us. Mr. Middleton has wrote me everything proper on that occasion, with which I am satisfied, and I hope you will receive benefit by his service at Dacca. I have wrote him that if he expects my friendship he cannot do better to secure that than to shew himself a faithful and diligent servant to your Excellency. Other particulars of your Excellency's friendly sentiments regarding myself I have understood from the letters of Raja Nund Comer and the representations of Nobkissen Munshee, and which gives me pleasure, who is always ready and diligent in your service.

Always favour me with your letters and make me glad.

These letters constitute a body of circumstantial evidence which goes far to confirm the statements made by Nubkissen in his petition, which, however, it may be confidently observed, hardly stand in need of corroboration, for a person in the position of Nubkissen would not have dreamt of making them if they were not absolutely true, and they would certainly not have passed unchallenged at the time.

That Nubkissen rendered valuable services to Clive and Adams was undisputed history over sixty years ago. A well-informed Anglo-Indian journal wrote :

"Raja Nubukissen was the founder of his own fortunes. He was a man of considerable attainments and great tact; well versed in Persian, and one of the very few natives who at that time knew anything of English. He was a writer in the employ of Clive who never

understood anything of the native languages. Though he occupied but a very subordinate capacity, he made himself very useful to the English during the period when they were negotiating with Meer Jaffer, and acquired *par excellence* the title of Moonshee. When the war broke out with Meer Cossim, he accompanied the Army of Major Adams as his banian. His address and zeal induced Lord Clive to recommend him to the Select Committee as their banian, at that time one of the most lucrative offices in Bengal. This laid the foundation of his great wealth."[1]

Rev. Dr. Hastie has observed with truth that "with more wisdom and less ambition he [Nubkissen] recognised the invincibility of the new power" and did not "make the fatal mistake of the unprincipled and ill-fated Nundcomar."[2] The fact is, Nubkissen recognised not only the invincibility of the new power, but the impossibility of improving the old régime or of evoking order out of chaos in any other way than by the assistance of the English. He felt that he had to save his country from a disaster by the establishment of an authority that should be at once just and strong. Such an authority he found in the English, for, as Mr. Francis Sykes said in his deposition[3] before the Parliamentary Committee, he had not merely formed a correct idea of their military power, but he also entertained a high opinion of their system of Government as well as of their capacity for administration.

Before this chapter is closed it is necessary to refer to an inquiry that was held by a Select Committee, with Lord Clive as president, into the several sums granted by Meer Jaffer towards restitution and donations. Nuncomar and Nubkissen are the principal witnesses that were examined, and the tale they unfold does little credit to the English Governors that were concerned. It is a tale of meanness,

[1] *The Friend of India* (5th April 1838).

[2] *Hindu Idolatry*, p. 54.

[3] *Fifth Report*, p. 544.

RAJA SIR RADHA KANT DEB BAHADUR, K.C.S.I.

fraud and extortion, and poor Meer Jaffer, ignorant and imbecile, comes to be an object of sympathy when he is entrapped, alternately bullied and cajoled, and finally compelled to surrender to the machinations. Hardly any comment is needed on the facts disclosed in the following depositions. At the meeting of the Committee held in Fort William on the 26th August 1766, Raja Nuncomar stated :—

"At the time Mr. Vansittart resigned the Government, the fresh demand of eight lakhs for restitution was still in debate. One day Mr. Spencer spoke to me on the subject and told me 'that unless that affair was adjusted he could not give his consent to the Nabob's departure or to mine.' With this I acquainted His Excellency, who said that nothing further could be done before Lord Clive arrived. 'But do you,' says he, tell Mr. Spencer that Assun Oula Cawn, an officer of the Government who had charge of the Province of Jessore, has absconded with Rs. 1,80,000[1] of the public money and now takes shelter in Calcutta. If this person is delivered up, I will settle about the eight lakhs.' His Excellency also desired Nobkissen to speak to Mr. Spencer on the same subject, and several messages having passed, Mr. Spencer promised to deliver him to the Nabob, but never did."

Further on in Nuncomar's narrative :—

"After this the Nabob and myself had our discussion, and set out immediately, His Excellency telling me he would return again upon the first advice of Lord Clive's arrival. He left Nobkissen here, and with him two persons who had direction to take charge of Asun Oula Cawn when he should be delivered up ; which he never was, for Mr. Spencer never performed his promise."

After Nuncomar's evidence was finished, "Nobkissen, Moonshee, being called before the Committee, delivers upon oath the following account of the Treaty of Restitution":—

"During the months of May or June 1764, and soon after Mr. Spencer's arrival, Mr. Vansittart wrote to the Nabob, who was then at Patna, desiring he would come down to Calcutta, which would be the easiest method of settling several affairs that remained to be adjusted. At the same time Mr. Spencer ordered me likewise to write

[1] It may be Rs. 80,000. The 1 may be a mere slip of the pen, judging from its appearance in the MS,

to the Nabob, desiring he would be under no apprehension, but come down, when Mr. Vansittart and himself would settle everything to his satisfaction. The Nabob not having it in his power so soon as expected, there was a delay of 15 or 20 days, at which Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer were much displeased, and also very angry with me. I told Mr. Spencer 'that the Nabob was a great man, that I was but a poor man, and that if anything happened to His Excellency, the blame must fall upon those who obliged him to come down.' Upon which, Mr. Spencer answered 'that everything should be done at the Board, that no harm would happen, and that a due regard would be had to all the Nabob's representations.' In consequence of this declaration, myself and others of the Nabob's friends wrote five or six letters to His Excellency, acquainting him that Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer had both given the strongest assurances and even engaged to us that no injury should be done him.

"Upon these assurances the Nabob came down, and, upon my waiting upon him, told me he was extremely satisfied with his reception.

"Two or three days afterwards Mr. Vansittart began to make his demand of forty lakhs on account of Restitution. When he spoke upon the subject to the Nabob, His Excellency replied: 'Did you not before ask me for ten lakhs only, and do you now want forty?'—making use at the same time of some harsh and violent expressions, and speaking so loud that he was overheard by others and myself, who stood without the door. As soon as he had got into his palanquin, 'Go you to Mr. Spencer,' says he to me, 'tell him the usage I have met with, and ask what they can mean by such unreasonable demands.' I went accordingly as desired, and Mr. Spencer told me 'that he had sat upon all the Committees for examining the claims of the sufferers, that he had strictly examined the losses, and that they absolutely amounted to the whole sum demanded.' Adding 'that he did not mention this before, because he thought 'if the Nabob was acquainted with it, he would not come down to Calcutta.' I then said 'What justice, Sir, is there in this? You first asked for ten lakhs only and now you demand forty.' To which he replied: 'The claims were not then brought in nor examined, else the demand would have been made at first.'

"This conversation I reported to the Nabob, who was very angry and said: 'Why did not you and others give me notice of this before? I

should then have been prepared and known how to act, whereas I must now remain in Calcutta.' In this ill temper he continued for several days, and would hearken to no one. From what motive I know not, but all of a sudden he sent for Juggut Chund and told him: 'I conclude from this extraordinary demand of Mr. Vansittart's that he wants something for himself. Do you go and tell him that, as to what relates to him, he shall be satisfied.' Juggut Chund went as desired, but what passed between him and Mr. Vansittart I cannot tell. However, on his return, he delivered Mr. Vansittart's compliments to His Excellency and told the Nabob 'that Mr. Vansittart considered himself as his son, that he entertained no bad intentions towards him, but wished him well, and asked why His Excellency was so angry with him,' concluding with observing 'that forty lakhs must be paid.' The Nabob, perceiving from all that had passed that Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer were of one mind, was very much displeased and remained sullen for some days.

"Myself and others, hearing that Mr. Vansittart intended making application to His Excellency for a large present to Commodore Tinker, went to the Nabob and told him of it; on which he flew into a rage, declaring 'that Mr. Vansittart was the bitterest of enemies to him; that he found he was determined he should not hold the Government; he might therefore send what officers he thought proper to manage the public affairs, for that he (the Nabob) was resolved not to stir from Calcutta.' Accordingly he wrote privately to the city for his women to be sent down, and they came bringing with them 20 or 30 lakhs of treasure in 35 boats.

"In fact, Mr. Vansittart made the above application for a present to Mr. Tinker and the squadron before the treasure and women arrived, upon which the Nabob sent me to Mr. Spencer to acquaint him of the fresh demand Mr. Vansittart had made. 'Tell him,' says he, 'that what with so many demands for indemnification to the Company, donation to the Army, restitution to the sufferers, the monthly payment exacted for the Troops, and what with the still unsettled, exhausted state of the country, it is absolutely out of my power to comply with this new demand for the squadron. I am therefore resolved to resign the Government if they go on in this manner, and let him and the Council appoint whom they please to manage the public affairs.' When I acquainted Mr. Spencer with this message, his answer was 'that several of the above demands had been made and agreed to before his arrived; nor was he yet Governor. That

His Excellency had better comply with the demand for 40 lakhs on account of Restitution, as fresh claims were coming in daily, and this would at once stop any further demands. That by continuing obstinate in his refusal he was obstructing his own interest, for had he consented but ten days ago, Mr. Vansittart would be gone away, he (Mr. Spencer) would then have been in the Government and the Nabob would then have everything done to his satisfaction ; but now he could neither go to Moorshedabad nor would Mr. Vansittart resign the Government, nor could he himself come to the chair till the Restitution was settled. That the present desired for Commodore Tinker was neither the Board's act nor his, but as to the forty lakhs for Restitution, he must, as a friend to the Nabob, desire I would go to him with his compliments and tell him it was his advice to him to comply ; for then, says he, Mr. Vansittart will resign the chair, I shall be Governor and the Nabob may depend on my showing him every act of kindness.'

"All this conversation I repeated to His Excellency, who asked me 'whether these were the real sentiments of Mr. Spencer's heart or words of course only,' and said : 'Why did you not lay greater stress on my determination to quit the Government ?' to which I answered that I had urged every argument in my power, but that, as staying two or three months longer in Calcutta must prove extremely injurious to his affairs, I could not help recommending that he would take it into further consideration. Upon which the Nabob said : 'I will consult with Nundcomar.'

"It was about this time that Mr. Vansittart delivered with his own hand to the Nabob a paper which His Excellency thought was couched in dark and ambiguous terms implying that unless he agreed to their demands he would not be permitted to leave Calcutta. Although neither he nor myself understood the paper thoroughly, the Nabob was much offended with it, and asked 'how long an answer to a letter would be coming from Europe.' I told him that he might have an answer in about eighteen months, upon which he sat down and wrote a very long letter to the Court of Directors ; but before he had finished it he signed the deed for forty lakhs, and then a further demand of eight lakhs was made.

"The Nabob having sent me again to Mr. Spencer, I represented to that gentleman the injustice of this fresh demand after having settled with His Excellency for forty lakhs, to which Mr. Spencer replied : 'I cannot help it. The accounts really amount to the

sum demanded, and you will inform the Nabob that he must pay it.' On my repeating this to His Excellency, he said. 'They are much akin. Their dispositions are equally good towards me. The one works his end by violence (meaning Mr. Vansittart), the other by cunning.'

"In this manner they went on debating till Mr. Vansittart's departure, after which Mr. Spencer told the Nabob: 'We have been disputing here about a trifle. You had better pay the eight lakhs. I am now Governor, and will support you to the utmost of my power. It will do us both credit that we have so easily settled this affair which could not be adjusted in Mr. Vansittart's Government. I will have no connection with your enemies. I will deliver up Assun Oola Cawn, and I will hold no intercourse with Doolubram, Petruse or Ramchurn.' These words seeemed to have influenced the Nabob, who paid 13 lakhs in Mr. Vansittart's time and 10 lakhs in three different payments during Mr. Spencer's Goverment."

Later on (at the same sitting of the Select Committee) Nuncomar was examined as to the donation to the Army, and then "Nabkissen, being questioned touching the donation to the Army, delivers the following particulars upon oath:"—

"I was not present when the agreement for a donation to the Army was made; but I have frequently heard from the Nabob's own mouth that the 25 lakhs which he gave the Army was a free and voluntary gift. There was a halt of the Army for the space of four days at Doodnagur, when a committee composed of the officers assembled to regulate the division of the Nabob's gift. Of this committee, consisting of thirteen officers, Major Adams desired I would acquaint His Excellency requesting he would grant powers to the above gentlemen to make the distribution I went that evening to the Nabob, but it being then his usual hour of eating, I could not see him; of which I informed Major Adams, who ordered me to go back immediately to the Nabob, for that the business was of so urgent a nature as would admit of no delay. I saw the Nabob, and acquainting him with my message, he asked: 'Can any harm be meant me by this Committee?' And I answered: 'No, there cannot' upon which he said: 'Do you draw out a paper such as they want, and I will sign it.' Accordingly I made a foul draft of the powers, which his own moonshee copied fair, and His Excellency signed.'

At the Select Committee next day (27th August 1766), Rajah Nuncomar deposed on oath as to the donation made to the squadron.

".....Upon all the Nabob's visits to Mr. Vansittart, I accompanied him; but no sooner had we retired than Doolubram came to him. One day Mr. Vansittart sent for me, and told me it was I that prevented the Nabob's making a suitable present to Mr. Tinker. This I denied, affirming that it proceeded from the Nabob himself, who would not hear of it. When I related what Mr. Vansittart said to the Nabob, 'This all,' says he, 'is the trick and artifice of Doolubram to bring an odium upon your office. Since that is the case, I will execute a teep for ten lakhs of rupees. Do you go and deliver it and let this affair be ended.' 'At the same time he sent for Ramchurn and Nobkissen, and told them that he understood they wanted to remove Nundcomar and place Doolubram in his office; but if they did, he would immediately throw up the Government."

Rajah Nuncomar continued his evidence before the Select Committee on the 29th August. He stated that Mr. Vansittart had observed that "Captain Affleck was soon going away to China, and that he ought to be considered before his departure;" so "Let the Nabob give Captain Affleck Rs. 50,000 and two lakhs to Mr. Tinker in ready money and for the remaining 12½ lakhs he may give a kistbundee."

".... In four or five days, adds the Deponent, the 2½ lakhs were provided and sent by Nobkissen to Mr. Tinker, who deducted about 13,000 rupees for the commission he promised me, which he sent by Nobkissen. Of this I kept 9,000 to myself and gave Nobkissen 4,000 rupees for his trouble."

The next witness (at the same sitting of the Committee) was Nubkissen. The entry is as follows:—

"Nobkissen, Moonshee, is brought before the Committee and duly sworn, after which he declares upon oath as follows:—

"'In the year 1763 I was with the Army at Doorgothy in the service of Major Adams. There came a letter then from Mr. Vansittart to the Major, who, after perusing it, told me it was to this purpose. 'That when the squadron was here before with Admiral Watson, the Nabob gave 50 lakhs of rupees for the joint use of the fleet and the army. That Mr. Tinker, a very great man, was now arrived, and

ought to have 25 lakhs, and that he, Mr. Vansittart, requested Major Adams to speak to the Nabob upon the subject.' Major Adams desired I would let the Nabob know this, and return to him with his answer. When I told the Nabob the purport of the letter, he replied: 'Who is this Mr. Tinker? He has done me no service. I have already driven Cossim Ally out of the country; if I wanted him, I would have called for him, and gratified him; but now what has he done for me?' I asked what answer should be returned to Mr. Vansittart. 'Do you,' says he, 'tell him plainly that I find he wants to revive our disputes; *like a rocket, no sooner immersed in water than it ascends again with unabated and undiminished lustre*,' remarking at the same time to me that when he left Calcutta everything had been adjusted. In a word His Excellency was extremely incensed, and I went and informed Major Adams of the issue of my message. What answer the Major sent Mr. Vansittart I don't know; but three or four days after came another letter from Mr. Vansittart to the Major, enclosing one to the Nabob. On receiving them the Major told me: 'Do you carry this letter to the Nabob; tell him I have received another to the same purport as the former, and desire he will consider of an answer and do what he thinks best.' Upon delivering the letter and message to the Nabob, he said: 'How can Major Adams, who is commanding officer on the part of the King of England, ask me to comply with so unjust a request?' I answered that I would acquaint the Major with what His Excellency said. When I told the Major, he said: 'We must be quiet for the present; but take an opportunity of seeing the Nabob again when he is in better humour, and hear then what he will say.' I frequently afterwards mentioned the subject to the Nabob; but he always grew so angry as to refuse hearing me; upon which I declared as my opinion to Major Adams that it was in vain going any more to His Excellency, for I was certain he never would give anything on this account.

"I know nothing further of this affair till after the Major's death, when I went to Chandernagore, of which District I was fougedar. While I resided there in the month of May or June 1764, I received a letter from Mr. Tinker's Banian, desiring me in his master's name to come down immediately to Calcutta, for he had business with me of very great moment. I came down accordingly and waited on Mr. Tinker, who asked me 'Why I left Calcutta and lived at Chandernagore. Why I did not rather stay with him, for he had a great deal of business for me.' He then told me of the teep for 5 lakhs procured

by Doolubram, which he would not receive. 'You must write,' says he, 'to Nundcomar; tell him that I am his friend, that I could not receive the teep procured by Doolubram, because I choose to have the business transacted by him. You may say that I know the Nabab has lost a good friend in Major Adams, but I am a much greater man than him and more able to do him service; for I will manage his business with the Council, with the Company, and with the King of England himself.' He then produced a box filled with a great number of papers. 'Look here,' says he, 'these are the particulars I have written relative to the affairs of this country, which I will lay before the King, and to which he will pay great attention. Within the space of two years I will so manage the Nabob's affairs that he no longer need pay any regard to the Council.

"After this, whenever I chanced to miss a day without waiting on Mr. Tinker, he sent a chubdar to call me. I did not, however, write in the manner he desired; but I acquainted Nundcomar with the substance of what passed, and, in the letters I wrote to the Nabob, referred to my correspondence with Nundcomar. Mr. Tinker pressed me to write to him every day, which I said I would not do, for, if my letters should be intercepted by Mr. Vansittart, he would be very angry. 'No, no,' says he, 'I will answer for it, he will not be angry; I am now going to him; do you accompany me.'

"When we came there, Mr. Vansittart encouraged me and desired I would be under no apprehension, but write as the Commodore directed. To which I answered 'that I could not engage in the affair, for if things went wrong I should be blamed.' Mr. Vansittart then again repeated 'Don't be afraid; I will take care of you,' and spoke very kindly.

"Soon after this the Commodore recommended me as Banian to Major Munroe: but I did not act in that capacity myself, but performed the business by a deputy. In this interim the Nabob came to Calcutta; and some visits of compliments having passed between His Excellency, Mr. Vansittart, and the Commodore, one day Mr. Tinker called me and said: 'You know there is a certain affair in agitation between the Nabob and me.' I replied: 'This business is conducted by a Mr. Vansittart;' and he answered: 'If you imagine the Nabob is averse to having this affair pass through Mr. Vansittart's hands, let me know, and I will go and talk to His Excellency myself.' I told him 'I could not make any reply; but I would let him know in a few days.'

MAHARAJA SIV KRISHNA BAHADUR.

"When first Mr. Vansittart mentioned a present for Mr. Tinker to the Nabob, he was very angry, and told me aftewards: 'I can never do business with Mr. Vansittart with any satisfaction, for he is my enemy,' expressing himself as if he believed Mr. Vansittart's intention was to remove Nundcomar and raise Doolubram to his employment by which means he would procure the present for Mr. Tinker, adding 'that he was determind never to admit Doolubram to that station, nor allow of any further donation to the squadron; but rather than submit to such exaction, they should themselves appoint a Subadar under whom they might place Doolubram, and then obtain the donation they wanted.' The Nabob further told me that Mr. Vansittart was continually sending for Nundcomar about this money for the squadron, threatening him and making him carry messages to him (the Nabob); but he was resolved not to hear anything Nundcomar should say on the subject. He also told me and some others of his servants in an angry tone: 'It was in consequence of your letters I came to Calcuta; but unless you can apply some relief to my present necessities, don't speak to me, nor come near me.' Accordingly we kept away for some days, but, being informed that Doolubram was appointed to Nundcomar's office, I then went and told the Nabob that Doolubram was to have his new appointment publicly notified in a few days, and that, unless he consented to the demand on behalf of the squadron, he must expect to see Doolubram in charge of the administration, when neither His Excellency nor Nundcomar would be permitted to leave Calcutta, which must bring inevitable ruin on his affairs.

"It was after this the Nabob told me that Mr. Vansittart had been with him a day or two before, and upon his (the Nabob's) being very angry told him: 'Sir, if you do not consent, we know how to manage it;' with which His Excellency being deeply afflicted, desired me to acquaint Mr. Spencer of what Mr. Vansittart had said, and bring back his answer. I told Mr. Spencer it was the public report that His Excellency and Nundcomar would be kept here and Doolubram be sent to the city to take charge of the administration; and asked him if there were any grounds for the report. Mr. Spencer laughed and said: 'The Nabob's a foolish weak man. He is hurting both us and himself, and I will give him no advice. Had he listened to me before he would have been long since at Moorshedabad.'

"With this I acquainted the Nabob, who said: 'What a distressed situation am I in! I am come to Calcutta where I have not a single friend, and because I love Nundcomar they are his enemies too.

Tell him to come to me this night.' Adding, in a violent rage : 'Let me once but get away from Calcutta and I shall then know how to act.'

"Not long after I went to Mr. Tinker, he asked me : 'Have you heard the news, that the Nabob and Nundcomar are to be kept in Calcutta? Had they been my friends who would have presumed to distress them? The Nabob might then have returned with credit to the city. If he will embrace it, he has good fortune still attending him. My nephew Lord Clive is coming. Colonel Coote is my particular friend. Mr. Spencer consults me in everything. In short, there is nothing done without my approbation ; and should Lord Clive know in what manner the Nabob has slighted me, he will be very angry. Should I not stay till his arrival, the Nabob would himself be convinced how much his Lordship esteems me. On my going away I will leave the necessary instructions with Mr. Spencer, and on my arrival in England I will send for Colonel Coote to my house and have some conversation with him. I shall then have an audience of the king, and a few days after I will present to His Majesty all my papers relative to this country. But there is one thing you must do for me, you must get a letter from the Nabob to the King of Great Britain. His Excellency must also give me a dress, with the proper jewels and sword, in which dress I shall wait on His Majesty to deliver the Nabob's letter ; let me know the proper hour, and I will wait on the Nabob in person.'

"I went to the Nabob and repeated word for word the above conversation. Mr. Tinker also visited him the next day, and related all these circumstances with his own lips to the Nabob. After he was gone, I remained with His Excellency, who told me 'that he found, unless he agreed to the demand for the squadron, Mr. Vansittart would not permit either him or Nundcomar to leave Calcutta ; he must therefore submit.' 'Mr. Tinker,' says he, 'will manage with the Council. Let us see what he will do.' In consequence, the several deeds were executed ; after which Mr. Tinker told me that Mr. Vansittart had applied to the Nabob for a paper acknowledging that his donation to the navy was voluntary and of his own free will. 'Do you,' says he, 'go in my name and tell His Excellency he will much oblige me by giving an acknowledgement to me likewise.' This request I mentioned to the Nabob, but cannot say whether ever it was granted. All I know is that, soon after, Mr. Tinker told me: 'I am the Nabob's and Nundcomar's real friend. Why have they expressed the note in such doubtful and ambiguous terms as render it of no signification? Mr. Vansittart has drawn up another ; see and get it signed by the Nabob.'

"Afterwards when I saw the Nabob he desired I would immediately get a letter drawn up from him to the Company, specifying his several grievances, and particularly his heavy sufferings on account of restitution to the merchants and donation to the navy—which letter went home by Major Shirlock. Another letter filled with similar, but still more bitter, complaints went home by Lieutenant Grant, who was Secretary to Colonel Coote."

At a meeting of the Select Committee, August 30, 1766, Ramchurn, late Banian to Mr. Vansittart, was examined as to the donation to the Navy. He said :—

".....But as he [Mr. Tinker] conferred much oftener with Juggut Chund and Nobkissen than with me upon this subject these will be able to give you the best account....."

Ramchurn said he took the Nabob's Obligation (for five lakhs) and letter to Mr. Tinker, who declared himself affronted. He said :

".....I find that neither you nor Mr. Vansittart are proper persons to transact my business. You are not upon terms of friendship with the Nabob. I will therefore manage it myself. Nundcomar's son-in-law and Nobkissen, the Nabob's Vakil, are here ; I will employ them....."

Ramchurn went on with his evidence up to the Nabob's arrival in Calcutta. Then as to Tinker's affair, he said :

".....How it was concluded I don't know, as it was entirely transacted between the Nabob, Nundcomar, Mr. Tinker, Juggut Chund, and Nobkissen....."

This body of evidence constitutes an unwritten chapter of Indian history, which, as already observed, hardly needs to have its moral pointed. It is the first instance, of which it is possible to discover traces, of the fleecing of a Nabob Its effect on the mind of the Nabob may be read in the extracts ; and very likely the story spread and produced its effects on other minds also.

Mr. Vansittart, so often mentioned in these depositions, had been appointed Governor of Calcutta in 1761. He appointed Ram Churn Roy as his Dewan (or Banian). He sent for Nabob Jafferaly Khan, Subadar, and Nabob

Mozufferjung, Naib Subadar, from Moorshedabad to Calcutta and removed them from the *musnud* for some faults they had committed. Nabob Kassimaly Khan being appointed Subadar removed from Moorshedabad to Monghyr and treacherously killed all the English gentlemen of Moorshedabad, Patna, Cossimbazar, &c., and despatched almost all the nobles of Bengal, including Royrayan Ommed Roy, Maharaja Ramnarain, Raja Rajbullabha and his son, and Jagat Sett and his brother. Jafferaly Khan, Mozufferjung and Maharaja Doollubhram who were then in Calcutta escaped the general fate.

Afterwards Major Adams went to war against Kassimaly Khan. Nubkissen accompanied him. He fought a battle at Oody Nullah, defeated Kassimaly Khan and pursued him across the *nullah* (ditch or canal). Kassimaly Khan, however, managed to effect his escape. Nubkissen, fatigued with incessant work under the order of Major Adams, was taken ill and confined to his tent. The soldiers of the Nabob plundered his tent and attempted to take his life, but he saved himself by a daring feat. He jumped into the *nullah*, swam across it and joined the British army. Major Adams also, in consequence of hardships and exertions, fell ill. Nubkissen and Mr. Skinner were bringing him to Calcutta in a boat, but unfortunately he expired on the way.

Mr. Vansittart embarked for Europe before Lord Clive's arrival on the 3rd May, 1765. His appointment of Kassimaly Khan as Subadar had proved disastrous and he had not the heart to face Lord Clive. Nubkissen was now employed as the confidential adviser of Lord Clive as before. After consulting him, Clive reinstated Jafferaly Khan as Subadar and Mozufferjung as Naib Subadar. Nubkissen accompanied Clive as far as Allahabad on the occasion that a treaty was concluded with His Majesty Shah Alum and His Highness Nabob Shuja-ud-Dowlah. He obtained from His Majesty on the 2nd Showal 1179 Higeree (1765 A.D.) the dignity of

Munsub Punjhazaree, three thousand sowar or horsemen, the title of Raja Bahadoor and a Palkee and many other paraphernalia. He received from His Highness the Nabob valuable *Khelats* and other marks of honor ; and on the same day a Munsub of one thousand five hundred sowar and the title of Roy were conferred on his two elder brothers. Nubkissen proceeded with Lord Clive to Benares and Azimabad. He effected a settlement of the Province of Benares with Maharaja Bulwant Singh, and of the Province of Behar with Maharaja Shitab Roy, and came back to Calcutta with Lord Clive.

One day as Lord Clive was engaged in the Council Chamber in consultation on the subject of rewarding the useful services rendered by Nubkissen, a Persian letter in answer to one of Lord Clive's, arrived from the Subadar of Arcot and his Lordship desired Nubkissen to read and explain it. Nubkissen finding the contents to be adverse to his own interests remained silent for a moment, but was obliged to interpret it, on being pressed. The substance of the letter was as follows : " It is my wish also that the war with the English Company being ended and a treaty concluded with them, both the Powers continue on good terms, but Raja Nobocrishna, who manages the Company's affairs, being the son of Dewan Ram Churn, the associate of my enemy Moneeruddin Khan, will obstruct the intended negotiations, for which reason it is needless to make mention of peace during the continuance of Raja Nobocrishna." Clive, on the letter being explained to him, desired Nubkissen to wait in an adjoining room for a short time. Nubkissen's feelings, at that moment of suspense, may well be imagined. Great was his relief when Clive, after a consultation with his Council, addressed him to the following effect : " Why did you not inform me so long that you were of such a noble family ? The Company have derived great benefit from your services and laborious undertakings. Not knowing the rank

of your descent we could not show you the respect due to it. From this day we appoint you Dewan to the Hon'ble Company and title and robe of honour, etc., shall be conferred on you shortly."

In the year 1180 Higeree (1766 A.D.) Lord Clive was pleased to get a Firman or Mandate from His Majesty Shah Alum, granting Nubkissen a dignity of Munsub Shush Hazaree, four thousand sowar, and the title of Maharaja. He was pleased also to bestow upon him a Gold Medal with a Persian inscription, as a testimonial to all India of the regard which Lord Clive and the Hon'ble Company had for his faithful and honest services, a *Khelat* with a precious garland of pearls, a head-dress, a shield, a sword and various other costly paraphernalia, including silver *Assa* and *Sotta*,—mace and staff,—still the insignia of the Sovabazar Rajas, borne by their attendants when they go out on formal occasions. His Lordship allowed him a guard of sepoys to watch his gate, and desired to fix for him a monthly salary of Rs. 2,000, upon which Nubkissen represented to Lord Clive that through his Lordship's benevolence he was not under the necessity of receiving from the Honorable Company such a large sum per mensem, but that a monthly allowance of Rs. 200 might be fixed for him and his heirs in perpetuity to preserve the status of his family. Clive complied with his representation and had the kindness to conduct him to his conveyance on an elephant, and the Maharaja came home in a grand procession, scattering rupees all about him. He received the sum of Rs. 200 every month from the General Treasury as long as he lived, but the allowance was not continued to any of his heirs. Lord Clive before finally leaving India in 1767 gave the charge of Government to Mr. Verelst, and Maharaja Nubkissen continued in the capacity of Political Dewan or Political Banyan to the Company and discharged his duties to the complete satisfaction of the new Governor.

A reference to the Gold Medal with the Persian inscription will be found in a letter of Mr. Henry Strachey's, dated 1793, which runs as follows :—

WILL STREET LONDON,
The 8th May 1793.

DEAR NOBKISSEN,

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to receive your letter, by the *Europa*, acknowledging the receipt of mine, and informing me of the kind notice you had taken of my son. Your finding a proper person to instruct him in the Persian language, and sending your own son to him often, are very essential services, and for which I am much obliged to you. But there is one part of your letter which does not meet with my approbation. I mean that part, where you say he shall command your purse. You know it is against the law for him to receive money from any body, and if he borrows it he will be in debt, which occasions the ruin of many young gentlemen in Bengal. If you can teach him economy, and prevent his being cheated or imposed upon by his servants, you will lay both him and me under great and lasting obligations. Although one reason of his going to India, was, that he might grow rich, yet I hope he will attain that object by degrees, and by means of his own industry. I would rather, he remained poor all his life, than that he should get money in any way that would disgrace himself and his family.

I am very glad that you continue grateful for the favors and honors bestowed upon you by our great and good friend Lord Clive. When I see his son (who is a fine young man) I shall not fail to deliver him your message. Lady Clive is well, but as she lives up the country, I seldom have an opportunity of seeing her. I have sent her your letter to read, as I know it would entertain her.

I remember your medal, with the Persian inscription, and approve much of your preserving it in your family, as a testimony to all India of the regard which Lord Clive and the Company had for your faithful and honest services.

It will always give me pleasure to hear of your health and prosperity. Write to me often, and I will as often send you my answers.

This letter will be delivered to you by my second son, Edward Strachey, whom I hope you will favor with your advice and protection, in the same manner as you do my eldest son.

I pray God to bless you. What can I say more?

Your faithful friend,
(SD.) HENRY STRACHEY.

CHAPTER IV.

ADVANCEMENT IN LIFE UP TO 1770.

NUBKISSEN was now a made man. The steps of his steady rise have been rapidly traced. In 1750 he was an obscure youth, who was content to accept the office of Persian tutor to Warren Hastings. In 1756, living in an obscure village, Panchgay, near Diamond Harbour, he supplied the English refugees there with provisions in spite of the prohibition of the Nawab, and he brought them valuable information relating to the Nawab's movements. In 1760 he became Clive's Munshi. In 1763 he was banyan to Major Adams during the war with Meer Cossim. In 1764, as has already been seen, he had acquired great influence with Clive and come to be in his confidence. In December of that year Nuncomar, who was then Meer Jaffir's Dewan, sent two lakhs of rupees through Nubkissen to Vansittart, as the following letter will show :—

Selection No. 726. Letter from Nund Coomar.

(Persian Department, No. 301.)

From

NUND COOMAR.

To

VANSITTART.

Received 26th December, 1864.

Upon my arrival at Moorshedabad with His Excellency the 20th of this month, I applied myself to the regulation of affairs there. I despatched to-day, the 25th of Jewady-ul-sany, on boats from the city the sum of two lacs, balance remaining of the twenty lacs on account of the damages sustained by the merchants. Please God they will arrive in five or six days. A list of the several sorts of rupees is sent to Nubkishen Moonshee, he will deliver the same to you, etc., etc.—*Rev. Long's Selections from Records of the Government of India.*

Nubkissen in the early days of his appointment under Clive had little influence. In regard to that there is the

evidence of Clive himself. In a Minute by John Johnstone, dated June 17, 1765, there was an insinuation that Clive had received bribes through some subordinates, one of whom was Nubkissen. He wrote :—

"The Select Committee have been pleased to lay before the Board several narratives of Mahomed Reza Cawn and Juggut Seat touching presents that have been made to sundry gentlemen by the Nabob..... We appeal to the world if Ramchurn Roy, who his Lordship certified served him entirely to his satisfaction—if Coja-Petruse, Nubkissen Munshy, Nundcomar, or any other of those able conveyancers were to be seized and confined close prisoners and made to answer, whether they willed or not, on oath to every question that a future Committee or Governor and Council should put to them as to the money their masters received."..... [1]

Clive's answer is worthy of note. [2]

. . . "With regard to Mr. Johnstone's observation concerning Ramchurn, Petruse, Nundocomar and Nubkissen, the first was dismissed my service, the second turned out of my house and the third put under confinement with a guard. All of them I look upon as villains and I defy all or either of them to produce a circumstance to my dishonour. As to the last, he was a man of no consequence at that time and never entrusted with matters of the least confidence."

The admissions contained in the accusation and the defence merit attention. Johnstone refers to Nubkissen as an able conveyancer, and Clive has not a word to say against his honesty.

Nubkissen stated in one of his depositions already quoted that he was Foujedar of Chandernagore in 1764. There is official evidence that in 1766 Nubkissen had come to be recognised as one of the "persons most responsible and whose characters and services merit consideration," as the following document will show :—

AT SELECT COMMITTEE, *November 4, 1766.*

"Advertisements having been already published that the Hon'ble Company's Pergunnahs were now to be let upon first leases, pursuant to a Resolution of this Committee, bearing date the 2nd of December

[1] Appendix to the Proceedings of the Select Committee, 1765, No. 7.

[2] Same Appendix, No. 8.

RAJA BAHADUR KALI KRISHNA—(KNIGHT OF THE GURKHA STAR).

last, 'that the leases of the present Farmers should expire on the 1st day of November, 1766; that the present renters should in future be excluded, and that the benefit of the lands should be diffused in the most extensive and equitable manner possible amongst all the reputable Banians and black inhabitants of Calcutta,' and divers petitions for lands being now presented to the Committee,

"Agreed that the following list be selected from the great number of petitioners as persons the most responsible and whose characters and services merit consideration, and that they be desired to attend next Tuesday in order the lands may be divided into lots and the rents adjusted by the most equitable valuation."

A list of 40 names is given, Nubkissen standing at the head.

During Clive's second visit to India Nubkissen materially assisted him in purifying the administration. That work of Clive's is described by Macaulay as "one of the most extensive, difficult and salutary reforms that ever was accomplished by any statesman." And there are reasons for presuming that Nubkissen rendered to him great services in the accomplishment of that noble work. He accompanied Clive to Allahabad when the Dewanny was obtained, presumably on his advice or suggestion. Naturally, honours came thick and fast on him. The Emperor Shah Alum was apparently more pleased with the recognition of his paramount title by Clive's application for a grant of the Dewanny than sorry for the virtual loss of his empire. As Macaulay puts it: "The Mogul was absolutely helpless; and, though he murmured, had reason to be well pleased that the English were disposed to give solid rupees, which he never could have extorted from them, in exchange for a few Persian characters which cost him nothing. A bargain was speedily struck; and the titular sovereign of Hindostan issued a warrant, empowering the Company to collect and administer the revenues of Bengal, Orissa and Behar." The Emperor was pleased to confer on Nubkissen the honours and rewards already mentioned, obviously in recognition of the part played by him in conducting the negotiations. The title of Maharaja Bahadur was not,

however, assumed by Nubkissen before the 25th January 1776[1].

The position and influence of Nubkissen were now assured. To crown his distinctions, he was, on the recommendation of Clive, appointed Political Banian to the East India Company on the 16th January 1767. The following is a copy of the official paper with reference to the appointment :—

Fort William, Jan. 16, 1767, at a Select Committee :

"Lord Clive (President) recommending Nobkissen Moonshee to the protection of the Committee.

"Resolved that, in consideration of his faithful and diligent services, Nobkissen be appointed the Hon'ble Company's Political Banyan, with a salary annexed of 200 rupees per mensem, the same to commence from this date."

This was the last meeting of the Select Cemmittee that Lord Clive presided at before his return to Europe.

Nubkissen secured for the Nuddea Rajas their title. The fact is worthy of attention as a proof not only of his absence of jealousy towards men highly placed, but of his appreciation of them and his desire to help and advance them. Evidence of this fact is to be found in the following petition :—

To

THE HON'BLE THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF RAJAH NOBKISSEN.

That at the time Lord Clive went to Illiabad to visit the King, Mr. Sumner applied to him to obtain the title and Jalurdar palanquin, etc., for the Rajah of Burdwan, at which opportunity your petitioner requested the same title, etc., might be also obtained for the Nuddea Rajah and did accordingly pay the Nuzzurannah of ten thousand rupees for the service of the latter; and Lord Clive on his return to Calcutta favoured both the Rajahs with the above titles, etc. When the Nuddea Rajah mentioned that as your petitioner was not at all benefited by the said title, etc., which is to continue to his descendants, he thought proper to give your petitioner the little village or mohuttron land called Serampore or Moolajore ; but your petitioner made

[1] Forrest's *Selections from the State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 480.

then an objection to expect a gift of the Rajah, because he was a Bramin, and therefore proposed that he would not take it without the Rajah's acknowledging the above ten thousand rupees to be looked upon as an acknowledgment for such mohuttron ; and it was settled accordingly to the satisfaction of the Rajah ; your petitioner obtained the Sunnud in the Bengal year 1173 for the said village which in the Bengal year 1171 was rated at no more than 625 rupees for the annual jummah. . . . . .

(Sd.) NOBKISSEN.

In a book called " The Nomenclature " deposited in the Record Department of the Government of India, Nubkissen is described as having been " Lord Clive's Dewan at the time of the elevation of Jafur Ulee Khan to the Musnud of Bengal. He amassed an immense fortune on that occasion and subsequently upon the acquisition of the Dewanee was placed by Lord Clive in the most confidential situations." There is no doubt that at this time Nubkissen was, if ever man was, a pluralist. He had charge of the following Government offices which he used to hold in his Sovabazar buildings : The *Munshi Dafter* (Persian Secretary's Office), *Arzbegi Daftar* (Petition receiving office), *Jatimala Kachari* (Tribunal for hearing and deciding cases relative to caste), the Money Godown (or Company's Treasury), the *Mal Adalat* (Financial Court) of the 24-Parganas, *Tahsil Daftar* (Office of Collector) of the 24-Parganas. As a humorous writer has it : " It is not the length, breadth, and depth of his titles, it is not the outward signs of honor by which the importance of Nubkissen can be correctly estimated. Rather the multitudinous and onerous official duties which belonged to him defined his proper position. At one and the same time he held seven offices. The Banian to the Committee or Political Dewan, he was the Persian Secretary, the Receiver of Petitions, the President of the Caste Tribunal, the Keeper of the Treasury, the Head of the Revenue Court of the 24-Parganas, the Collector of the 24-Parganas, and what not. With other years he filled other posts, but whether they were added to the old ones, or whether

he had to relinquish some, is unknown. This we know that over and above his regular duties he was frequently called on to execute jobs. Besides his ordinary offices, he may be said to have been a minister without a portfolio. What an index these duties and more to the capacity of a single individual and to the confidence reposed in him by his masters! This man was half the Government! How this Brobdignagian official stalked amidst the puny administrators, including his superiors, who divided among themselves the other half and seemed ready to break down under its weight."[1]

In illustration of the influence and position of Nubkissen at this period, the following letters may be incidentally referred to:—

Persian Department Proceedings, Letters Received, 1767 *and* 1768.

From

RAJAH DIARAM PUNDIT

To

MR. VERELST.

Your servant has at this time received 3 hundred gold mohurs from the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowla, 100 from Mr. Sykes, 200 from the Nawab Mahomed Reza Khan, and 50 from Mahah Rajah Mihindur as a Nazar for the sacred presence. This I write for your Excellency's information. Mr. Sykes and the Nabob Mahomed Reza Khan ordered your servants to provide a string of pearls agreeable to established custom for Mahah Rajah Mihindur, which having got in readiness I delivered to them, who presented it to the aforesaid Mahah-Rajah. Your servant has been favoured with no Nazar for sacred presence on account of your Excellency, nor have any of the other gentlemen delivered him any. Whatever Nazar your Excellency shall think proper to present to His Majesty you will put in a purse under your own seal, after the manner of the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowlah and direct the other gentlemen that they deliver their Nazars for His Majesty to your servants after the example of your Excellency. When the Nazar shall arrive in the presence from the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowlah, Mr. Sykes, Mahomed Reza Khan and Maha Rajah Mihindur and no Nazar shall appear from your Excellency, your own superior judgment will point out you, what ideas will enter into His

[1] *Mookerjee's Magazine*, April 1861, pages 146, 147.

Majesty's breast. A shukah from the sacred presence addressed to your Excellency arrived with me some days since, and I transmitted it to your presence accompanied with a letter from the Nabob Minere-ut-Dowlah through the hands of Rajah Nobkissen. A 2nd shukah is at this time arrived with me accompanied by another letter from the Nabob and I now transmit it to you enclosed. . . . . .

Persian Department Proçeedings, Letters Received 1767 *and* 1768.

No. 32.

From

THE NAWAB MENIRE-UT-DOWLAH

To

VERELST.

On the 16th January I arrived at Allahabad and paid the duties of allegiance to His Majesty. God is witness how heavy the hours of absence have sat upon your friend and how incessantly your praises hang upon his tongue. May the Almighty soon raise a conjuncture and create a cause which may again restore me to the society of your Excellencies. My gracious Lord I have written you five several times without having yet been favoured with a single answer. I entreat that my addresses may be honoured with your immediate notice, and that you will order timely answer to be written.

I particularly request your strongest injunctions to Maha Rajah Nobkissen for this purpose.

This letter is corroborative evidence that Nubkissen had already been made a Maharaja.

Influence never fails to excite jealousy, and one is not surprised to find that the eminent position and commanding influence of Nubkissen at this time made him many enemies. Men whose ill-feeling and designs of active hostility had so long been latent, felt themselves encouraged to throw aside all reserve after Nubkissen's friend, patron and protector had left the country. Within three months after Clive had left India complaints were preferred against Nubkissen to the Select Committee. One Ram Nath Das complained of extortion practised on him by Nubkissen, and two men, Ram Sunar Ghose and Nemoo Gangoolee, charged him with having violated the wife of a Brahmin. The Select Committee

caused both the charges to be thoroughly enquired into. They were found to be false, Nubkissen was acquitted, and the complainants and their abettors were ordered to be punished. It transpired in the course of the inquiry that at least one of the complaints, that of outrage on a woman, had been instigated by Nuncomar. Nubkissen had already been brought into relations with Nuncomar, but it will be convenient to reserve for separate notice all facts concerning Nuncomar and his trial (which had not yet come) that may be relevant to this biography. Concerning the charges just referred to, the enquiry held and the decision arrived at, the best that can be done is to let the following original documents speak for themselves :—

AT SELECT COMMITTEE ON APRIL 18, 1767.

The Hon'ble the President lays before the Committee the following petition presented to him by Nobkissen Moonshy.

To

THE HON'BLE HARRY VERELST, ESQ.,

President and Governor, &c., &c., of Fort William.

THE MEMORIAL OF NOBOKISSEN OF CALCUTTA.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

That it is with the utmost difficulty and reluctance your Petitioner is reduced to the disagreeable necessity of begging your Honour's patience for the perusal of the following, which nothing but the most dear and valuable of all earthly privileges, the defence of his character, could have made him thus presume to trouble you with, at the same time hopes his conduct has been and ever shall be, unblameable before your eyes.

Your Memorialist, the first time Lord Clive was in Bengal during the Government of the Nabob Surajah Doulah, was employed and entrusted with all private engagements made between the Nabob Jaffer Ally Cawn and his Lordship, also during the war with Cossim Ally Cawn, he was from the beginning to the end attending on Major Adams, and executed such services as caused his Lordship on his return to this country to take him again into his service ; and as his Lordship found him desirous of no other employment than that of the public, and constant and faithful in the discharge of his duty, he was graciously pleased to raise him to great honours.

Before his Lordship's departure for England, believing him to be sufficiently experienced he [Lord Clive], made him principal Banyan for the affairs of the Government and as a further testimony and approbation of his conduct, presented him with an elephant and a medal.

These marks of his Lordship's favour and esteem, together with the countenance he has since met with from your Honour, by taking him into your service, he has too great reason to fear has [? have] drawn on him the resentment and jealousy of wicked and envious minds, as the following facts will certainly evince, as they are only calculated to depreciate and wound the man whose good fortune, under the auspices of his Lordship and your Honor, has raised him above the common and usual advances in life, and not, as they pretend, to punish the guilty.

My enemies have in vain searched for proofs that I raised my fortune by bribery and undue means, in hopes that by such a discovery they might have been able to have ruined my character and reputation; disappointed in this, their efforts are now extended to more base and villainous ends, my life is now what they thirst after and altogether indifferent about the means by which it may be accomplished; for I can at this present [moment?] prove that two men, the one named Ram Sunnar Ghose, the other Nemoo Gangolee have, either as principals or employed by others, been tampering with a Bramin's wife of Calcutta to accuse me of violating her; that this was the most favourable time that could offer, and promised her a sum of money for her compliance; the Bramin used his utmost endeavours to engage his wife in this wickedness; but happy for me she absolutely refused, although her life was threatened to accomplish the design.

The present diabolical accusation against me is as follows: One Ram, a goldsmith, complained to me that his mother and brother-in-law forcibly withheld his wife from him in their house, and not only refused him admittance to her, but permitted another man to visit her, which circumstance if known he would be in danger of losing his caste; therefore entreated me, as I had the charge of the Caste Cutcherry, to call the parties together before me and settle the affair. I complied with his request, and after a hearing, the matter was compromised to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned; but to my great astonishment and surprise, near twenty days after, I found Gocul, a brother-in-law of Ram, had presented a petition to your honour, complaining that I endeavoured to take his sister by force from his house.

You, Sir, referred the affairs to Mr. Floyer, the then Zemindar, and directed me to go to him for a clearing up of this matter. I obeyed and found Mr. Bolts with Gocul and Kissen, the two brothers-in-law of Ram, there.

Mr. Floyer entered upon the business, when Gocul gave him a paper written in English containing an account of the complaint made against me, which Mr. Bolts declared was a true translation he had made from the Bengal [i]. Mr. Floyer having read it aloud, Gocul swore to it, and signed it. Mr. Floyer then asked Gocul if he had any witnesses, telling him now is the proper time for their evidence. Gocul replied: His brother Kissen. Accordingly, Kissen was called in and sworn. Mr. Floyer was desirous of interrogating Kissen, but Mr. Bolts interrupted him by saying Kissen was ready to swear what was contained in the written paper already subscribed and sworn to by Gocul. Upon my requesting Mr. Bolts might not interfere, he bade me hold my tongue, nor desisted till the Zemindar ordered us both to be silent. Mr. Floyer then took Kissen's evidence and wrote the particulars with his own hand. Afterwards I delivered my account; it being read, I swore to and signed it; also my witnesses for the truth of every particular gave their depositions and swore to them.

When it shall be known to your Honour that there is a very essential difference in the depositions given by Gocul and Kissen, notwithstanding they live in the same house and had concocted the whole affair together, and that Kissen, at the instigation of Mr. Bolts, would have signed and swore to the deposition given by his brother, Gocul, had he not been prevented by my protesting against such proceedings as unfair; also that the tenor of the petition presented to you, Hon'ble Sir, and the written depositions delivered to Mr. Floyer are very far from agreeing with the pretended facts alleged against me, it surely will, I hope, be a sufficient proof of my innocence. But should this prove insufficient for your satisfaction, I am ready and willing at any time to subscribe to the most solemn oath, according to the rites and customs of my religion, that I never, to the best of my knowledge, from the hour of my birth to this day, spoke with, saw, or have had any connection with either of the three sisters of Gocul and Kissen, nor did I know that there were such persons in being, till this affair was trumped up against me.

One thing more I beg leave to observe: that it should have been the particular business of the woman injured to have immediately complained and applied for justice, as the offence was of so heinous a nature, and not have done it by my avowed enemy, Mr. Bolts,

nor have suffered so much time to elapse, contrary to the methods in such cases; nor do I as yet know positively who the woman is that is said to be injured by me.

All which I humbly submit to your Honour's consideration.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray.

(Signed) NOBOKISSEN.

CALCUTTA, *the 10th March 1767.*

The above Petition being read, the President also lays before the Committee a memorial to the Council from Ramnaut, late banian to Mr. George Gray, the subject of which the President thinks comes more properly under consideration of the Select Committ than of the Board.

To

THE HON'BLE HARRY VERELST, ESQ.,

President and Gentlemen of Council at Fort William

HON'BLE SIR AND SIRS,

I take the liberty of presenting you with this humble address for two purposes, both which, I hope, will be esteemed to merit the consideration of your Hon'ble Board. One is, in order to put a stop to the corrupt practices of a man who has been entrusted with the management of transactions of the highest trust and of the greatest importance to the affairs of the Hon'ble Company. And the other is, in order to obtain justice of restitution for the oppression and damage done me in particular.

The grievance complained of, is my having to the amount of thirty-six thousand rupees extorsively exacted and taken from me by Nobkissen Munshy, during my late confinement, *ex colore officii*, availing himself of my ignorance of the English laws and customs. He used to visit me in my confinement, and there by threats and under various scandalous, villainous, and false pretences did demand and receive from me.

In the month of Ograhn	...	A ring, value Rs.	14,200.
Pous	...	500 Gold Mohurs.	
Choytro	...	400 do.	
Badro	...	500 do.	
	TOTAL	1,400, value = Rs.	20,000
With 2 Pgs. of Bootedars and sundry other things given by his order to his people, value		,,	2,000
	TOTAL	,,	36,200

The pretences he made use of were that he would preserve me, or get me excused, from taking my oath on the Ganges water before the Select Committee that I might have the greater latitude for what I was to declare verbally; that he would procure my releasement; that he would give me a Khelat and send me away again Dewan to Mauldah, and that he would save my life, which I was to be deprived of when he found it necessary to threaten me.

I acknowledge my ignorance of the salutary laws of Great Britain in suffering myself to be thus imposed upon, as well as my folly in having ever supposed him to be of such consequence to the Hon'ble the Select Committee. Yet as the well-being of the Hon'ble Company's affairs in a great measure depends upon the impartiality and integrity of those whose office does in any way concern the administration and execution of justice, or the common good of the subject, I humbly hope still to obtain redress, and as I have heard much of the justice of the English laws and am informed that the Hon'ble Court of Directors have been pleased to order that "If a Native chooses the decision of his grievances, by English laws, those and those only must be pursued, and pursued according to the directions in the Charter." I am very desirous of laying my case before the juries at the next sessions, where I am informed it is only cognizable; but lest the preferring in that manner my complaint against him while in office should be of any detriment to the affairs of the Hon'ble Company under his management, I hereby first humbly beg the permission of the Hon'ble Board. And as the grievances I do complain of tend manifestly to the evil example of all others the Company's Banyans in office, as well as to the great oppression and detriment of the Native inhabitants in general, I humbly hope, Hon'ble Sir and Sirs, that you will please to grant me the permission required, that I may be enabled to obtain redress and restitution of my property.

I am, with the greatest respect,
Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,
Your most faithful and obedient Servant,

FORT WILLIAM, (Sd.) RAM NAUT DASS.
The 10th April 1767.

Ramnaut's memorial being read, the President observes that the charge of venality and corruption contained in Ramnaut's complaint against Nobkissen deserves the serious attention and immediate consideration of the Committee. That the strictest inquiry, he thinks, should be made into the truth of the facts alleged, in order the Committee may have the most satisfactory proofs of the guilt or

innocence of a person who, in quality a political Banyan, is necessarily entrusted with the Company's most important affairs. That Nobkissen being likewise the President's Moonshy, it becomes his indispensable duty to be well satisfied of the integrity of a man in whom he unavoidably reposes much confidence, and that any reluctance to hear complaints against Nobkissen, or backwardness to redress the grievances of those who have been injured by him, will deeply reflect upon the honour and justice of the President and Committee. For this reason it was that he sent for Ramnaut and examined him upon the facts set forth in his memorial, not one of which he finds Ramnaut can support by a single proof or evidence, the whole charge resting upon his single assertion.

The President further acquaints the Committee it was with the same view he made inquiry into the other charges brought against Nobkissen, although they did not so immediately affect his character in a public station ; since conviction of his guilt in one instance would serve to corroborate the facts urged by Ramnaut, and render Nobkissen unworthy of the Committee's protection. That he has the greatest reason to believe that the whole story of Nobkissen's having violated the wife of a Bramin has been maliciously forged by Nobkissen's enemies with intention to ruin him.

That the other charges brought against Nobkissen of his having forcibly carried off the wife of Ram, a goldsmith, appears to be equally void of truth, and to spring from the same principle of jealousy and resentment, as the Committee will perceive from the Zemindar's report of this transaction, which he now submits to the consideration of the Board :—

"Sir,—Herewith I send you the information and deposition of the several persons who appeared before me in consequence of a complaint made against Nobkissen. On perusal of them, I daresay you will be of opinion with me that it is an accusation maliciously invented to depreciate his character and to entail a general odium upon him, as there is not a single circumstance in the said depositions that can even create a suspicion of his having had the informant's sister at his house.

"As I am not now Zemindar, I have no longer the power to officiate as such in the punishment I think is due to the informant and his brother ; but I will explain the case to Mr. Aldersoy, the present Zemindar, that he may proceed therein as he thinks proper.

"After you have done, Sir, with the information and depositions, I shall be obliged to you if you would be pleased to return them to

me, that they may be given to the present Zemindar. The information and Nobkissen's deposition were both brought to me written in the English language, which after having been read and explained to the informant and deponent, they both took their oaths to and signed. The others were taken in my presence."

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble Servant,

17th February 1767. CHARLES FLOYER.

The President further observes that, whatever his own sentiments may be, he thinks it necessary the Committee should make the strictest inquiry into the facts above represented, by calling before them Ramnaut and the other accusers, that, if Nobkissen should appear to them guilty of any part of so heinous a charge, he may be immediately dismissed from his employments, and otherwise punished with the most exemplary severity. But that, if on the contrary his innocence should become manifest and his reputation be cleared to the entire satisfaction of the Committee, they would then take the necessary measures for his protection, and the punishment not only of the infamous accusers themselves, but of all who shall appear to have assisted, instigated, promoted and encouraged so villainous an attempt against the life and character of a servant of the Hon'ble Company acting in so high and important a station.

The President concludes with acquainting the Committee that having reason to believe Ramnaut, the Bramin, and other accusers upon this occasion, are the tools and instruments of a concealed faction, he had ordered them under a guard, to prevent their being tampered with and instructed in their evidence, until they could be examined by the Committee.

Upon this representation from the President, the Committee judge it necessary to their own honour that Nobkissen's accusers should be examined before them.

Accordingly, Ramnaut, being called upon, had the following questions proposed to him by the President :—

Q.—In your memorial to the Council you accuse Nobkissen of taking and extorting from you money and effects to the amount of 36,200 rupees. In what manner, and for what purposes, was this sum taken from you?

A.—When I was first under confinement, Nobkissen sent to me, and told me to give him something and he would procure my release. To which I answered by desiring three days to consider of it, and at the end of that time I consented to give him 25,000 rupees,

Q.—Who brought you the message from Nobkissen?

A.—He was a light-coloured man; but I did not know him, nor have I seen him since this transaction happened.

Q.—By whom did you return the answer that you would give him 25,000 rupees?

A.—By the same man who brought the message.

Q.—Did that man stay with you for the three days which you took to consider your answer?

A.—No; he came three days successively.

Q.—Did you ever ask the man his name?

A.—I believe I did; but I do not recollect what it was.

Q.—Did you enquire his employment?

A.—Yes; it was that of a Sircar.

Q.—You say in your memorial that Nobkissen took from you a ring worth 14,200 rupees. In what manner was this ring taken, and to whom did you deliver it?

A.—One day that Nobkissen came to me, he embraced me in a friendly manner, and sat down with me, and desired I would bring complaints and accusations against Mr. Gray. He likewise asked if I received and understood the message he had sent. I replied that I did, and agreed to give him 25,000 rupees. Upon which, he said "give it me." I told him I had not the money at that time, but I went to my escritoire and took out the ring, which I gave him, with a nizar of two gold mohurs, telling him that I valued the ring at 14,200 rupees.

Q.—Who was present at this transaction?

A.—Nobody. I was then confined under a guard.

Q.—How came you by a ring of so great value?

A.—I got it near Benaras, having purchased it from Curram Beg.

Q.—Who is that Curram Beg? and where is he?

A.—I believe he is gone to Delhi.

Q.—You likewise declare in your memorial that in the month of December 1765 he took from you 500 gold mohurs. In what manner were these mohurs taken, and for what purpose?

A.—That was also when I was confined. I desired to have the guards removed. Nobkissen answered that I had not yet paid the sum I promised him; to which I replied that I had only 500 gold mohurs in cash, which I was ready to pay, and accordingly then gave to him.

Q.—Was there anyone present when you gave the money?

A.—No; there was no one present. The people were all sent away, and I gave the mohurs into his own hands.

Q.—You also say in your complaint that in the month of March 1766 you had a further sum of 400 gold mohurs taken from you by Nobkissen, who was present when this money was taken?

A.—I gave these mohurs after my release. Some of my relations being then confined, I gave the money in consideration of their freedom. I went to Nobkissen's house, and Jaggamoan, my Kismagur, [Kitmutgar?] went with me, and carried the mohurs; but, upon my entering on conversation with Nobkissen he retired to a private room and did not see me deliver the money.

Q.—Where is Jaggamoan?

A.—He is gone to Maulda.

Q.—You further allege that Nobkissen took 500 gold mohurs from you in the month of August last, where, for what purpose, and who was present when this money was given?

A.—When Nobkissen returned from Patna in August, I visited him and he told me that he understood I was turned a great merchant and had bought a quantity of cotton and other goods. A few days after this conversation peons were placed upon my house; and in two or three days after I was conveyed to the Governor's house and kept there till 8 o'clock at night. Another day I was carried there and detained till 12 in the forenoon. Upon this I offered 500 gold mohurs for my liberty, upon which Nobkissen sent to order away the peons from my house.

Q.—Did you ever acquaint any person of the sums extorted from you by Nobkissen?

A.—Yes; I informed my own servants and several other persons.

Q.—Can you name any one to whom you gave information?

A.—I cannot recollect any person in particular.

Q.—You say you were ordered by Nobkissen to give presents to the amount of 2,000 rupees to his servants. Was it by his order?

A.—No, it was not by his orders; but I gave presents to his people in value 2,000 rupees.

Q.—You say you gave the ring in the month of November 1765. Why did you not complain sooner of the money and effects extorted from you?

A.—I was confined the greatest part of the time since, which was the reason I did not complain.

Q.—Did you not in the month of August come to Mr. Verelst for leave to return to Maulda? Did not you then owe him money for goods formerly bought of him, and for payment of which you were pressed, and did you not excuse yourself by pleading poverty?

RAJAH DEBI KRISHNA.

Why did not you then complain of those extortions by which you were impoverished and prevented from discharging your just debts?

A.—I was afraid of Nobkissen.

Q.—You know that Nobkissen is still in the same employment. Why are you not afraid of him now as well as then?

A.—I am in hopes of obtaining justice from the Governor, who acts under God.

Q.—Have you been advised by anyone to prefer this complaint?

A.—No, it is voluntary; but, entering on the 5th day of this month into the service of Mr. Bolts, I related my case to him. He said it was very hard, advised me to complain to the Governor of Council, and drew up my paper of complaint.

Q.—In what particular station do you serve Mr. Bolts?

A.—I was entertained to collect outstanding balances in Poornea and other places, on promise of being paid 100 rupees per month; but I have not yet received any wages.

Q.—Have you yet done any business for Mr. Bolts?

A.—No, I have not. I have only gone to his office to make my compliments.

Q.—Have you anything further to allege against Nobkissen?

A.—No, I have not.

Nobkissen was then called in, and the above evidence being distinctly read to him and Ramnaut, he is desired to speak what he has to offer in his own defence. Nobkissen accordingly confesses that when he went by Lord Clive's order to Ramnaut about the money he was directed by the Governor and Council to refund to the inhabitants of Maulda, he then received from Ramnaut a nizar of two gold mohurs. He also received from him at another time a nizar of two or three pieces of cloth. That as to the ring, he calls upon Ramnaut to produce a single proof that he ever had or was seen to have such a ring in his possession. The names of all the servants of his family at that time stand registered in his books. He desires they may all be called upon to declare whether they ever saw the ring mentioned or whether they, or any of them, ever carried any demands for money from him upon Ramnaut; or whether they knew that he had received such sums, or had ever seen an entry in his books of such presents as Ramnaut alleges. Further offers to give a restitution bond to the Committee to the amount of 36,200 rupees—nay, of his whole fortune, should Ramnaut be able to prove that he ever received or obtained from him by presents or otherwise to the value of a single rupee more than the 2 mohurs and pieces of cloth already mentioned; and he

very justly remarks the inconsistency that appears in Ramnaut's complaint. Ramnaut was directed by the Council to refund 27,000 rupees. This was in November. He was confined until he could give security for that sum. There was no other cause, nor can he (Ramnaut) mention another cause assigned for his confinement. He must acknowledge that he could not either pay or give security for the payment of 27,000 rupees, which would have procured his freedom; and yet he now alleges that he gave Nobkissen to the amount of 36,200 rupees only to intercede for his release. Nobkissen concludes his defence with these words: "After he had corrupted me with more than the sum he was ordered to refund, he was still subject to the demand; whereas by a proper application of his money he might have served every purpose without assistance from me. What probability, gentlemen, is there in this story? you are the judges."

Nobkissen having finished his defence, Ramnath is told that every particular of his accusation being flatly denied by Nobkissen and rendered very improbable by some circumstances pointed out by the defendant, it now becomes necessary he should produce some proofs of the truth of his charge, which he might bring with as much appearance of truth against any other man as Nobkissen. And, being asked whether he had any proofs, he answers that he has none, for that the whole transaction was carried on with the greatest privacy.

Ramnath was then ordered to retire.

Nobkissen desiring that Conytacoor [Kanai Thakur ?] the Bramin, his wife, and the evidences mentioned in his petition, might be examined by the Committee, before they came to any Resolution, they were accordingly called in, and the Bramin, being asked if he had any matter of complaint against Nobkissen, replies no, that he has nothing himself to allege, but that he had been much pressed and solicited by Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee to accuse Nobkissen of violating his wife. That he had been sent for by Nundcomar, who desired he would complain of Nobkissen to the Board, and said he would assist him with money in the meantime, and when the affair was over, give him 25,000 rupees to compensate him for losing caste. He further declares that, wrought upon by Nundcomar's promises and the persuasions of Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee, he used his utmost endeavour to prevail on his wife to accuse Nobkissen; but she would never give her consent to be the instrument of ruining an innocent man, and that, when he asked Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee for what purpose they would have him accuse Nobkissen,

their answer was that he would be sued for carrying away the goldsmith's wife, and this fresh charge would add a link to the chain.

The Bramin having finished his declaration, Ramsonnar Gose was called in, and being informed of the particulars of the Bramin's declaration, was asked what he had to reply in his own defence. Accordingly he confesses that he has been to the Bramin's house, that he knew of Nemo Gongolee's attempt to bring the Bramin's wife to accuse Nobkissen, but that he himself never interfered in the business or spoke upon the subject to the Bramin or his wife.

To confront Ramsannor Gose the Bramin's wife is called in. She declares that she never was any way injured by Nobkissen ; but that Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee had used every endeavour to persuade her and her husband to accuse him. That Nemo Gongolee offered to give her 500 rupees in joys [jewels?] and 2,000 rupees in money if she would consent, and that Nundcomar and Nemo Gongolee had worked so much upon the mind of her husband by large promises and offers of money that he (the Bramin) even threatened her life if she refused to comply. However, that she still persisted in declaring that she would never ruin an innocent person, and at last finding there was no end to persecuting her, she sent privately to acquaint Nobkissen with the designs formed against him by his enemies.

Kissandebuss declares before the Committee that he heard Nemo Gongolee soliciting the Bramin's wife to accuse Nobkissen and assuring her that Nundcomar would give her joys and 2,000 rupees in money if she would consent.

The same is also confirmed by Carteram, who relates the same circumstances as the Bramin's wife and Kissandebuss of the share Nundcomar has in this transaction.

The several evidences being now dismissed, the Select Committee proceed to the following Resolution, *viz.*—

That the charge brought against Nobkissen by Ramnaut is neither confirmed by proofs nor corroborated by circumstances, and that it rests entirely upon the bare assertion of a man already convicted of avowed perjury before the Council, and who appears to be instigated by a faction and impelled by resentment to make this daring attack on the character of a person countenanced and protected by the Government.

That, therefore, Ramnaut, as a just punishment for his having forged and published a false, scandalous, and malicious libel, be sent

out of Calcutta and delivered over to the Country Government to make good to the inhabitants of Maulda the several sums he extorted from them, agreeably to the following Resolution of the Council the 30th day of December 1765: "The Board, having perused and considered the several proceedings already taken and recorded, are of opinion that Ramnaut appears to be a notorious villain, having certainly taken several sums of money from many people in the Province of Bengal by extortion and violence, and committed crimes for which he deserves the most exemplary punishment. This circumstance, however, the Board refer for further consideration and for the present Resolve that he shall refund to the different people the whole that he had collected from them."

That Mr. William Bolts appears from many circumstances to be deeply concerned in the conspiracy to ruin Nobkissen's character and attempt his life; in which opinion the Committee are confirmed by his violent and declared resentment to Nobkissen by the share he took in stirring up and instigating a prosecution against him in the Zemindary Court upon an imaginary and false accusation; and particularly from his taking at this juncture into his service Ramnaut, a man who stands publicly convicted of perjury, with a view of forging and publishing further aspersions upon Nobkissen's character.

That Mr. Bolts, having on this and many other occasions endeavoured to draw an odium upon the administration, and to promote faction and discontent in the settlement, has rendered himself unworthy of any further indulgence from the Committee and of the Company's protection. That, therefore, he be directed to quit Bengal and proceed to Madras on the first ship that shall sail for that Presidency in the month of July next in order to take his passage from thence to Europe in September.

That Nundcomar, appearing to have promoted, instigated, and forged accusations against Nobkissen by large promises of money and presents, with a view of gratifying his personal resentment and indulging an intriguing disposition, shall be ordered by the President strictly to confine himself to his own house, and in future to avoid such practices, on pain of forfeiting the Company's protection and being delivered over to the Government for such punishment as his crimes may be thought to deserve.

That the zemindar be desired by the President to inflict such punishment upon Ram the goldsmith, and the other evidence upon that

occasion, as he shall think due to the base attempt to ruin the character and take away the life of an innocent person.

And lastly, that Ramsonnar Gose, Nemo Gongolee, and the other instruments and agents employed by Nundcomar to stir up and carry on this prosecution, shall be publicly flogged and then turned out of the settlement."

Incidental testimony, of a striking kind, of the influence of Nubkissen and of the jealousy roused by it, is to be found in a letter alleged to have been written by Nawab Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Nuncomar, dated April 1766.

Translation of a Letter from the Nabob Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Maharajah Nund Coomer, dated the 27th of Showal of the 7th year (the 8th of April, 1776). [Appendix to the Fifth Report. 12.]

I had the pleasure to receive your letter and rejoice to hear of your welfare. Thank God I am also well. I met Lord Clive (the Nabob Ameer-el-Momalik Sabut Jung Bahadoor) and General Carnac (Munsoor-ul-Muluk General Bahadoor) at Plassey and they received me very kindly. On the 24th instant (the 5th of April) his Lordship the General and Mr. Sykes arrived at the Killa. The Begum, my mother, sent Hajee Saaudut to call those gentlemen to her, and after much solicitation prevailed on them to accept from her a paper under her seal for five lacks of rupees in jewels, rupees and gold mohurs; this I have written for your information. With regard to what you write me, that I should make known my requests to his Lordship through the General, I will follow your advice, but Nobekissen Moonshee, having waited on me about business, made many professions of fidelity and attachment to me and then came in a roundabout manner to the point and spoke much of the great confidence reposed in him by his Lordship. In short, from the tenor of his conversation, it appears that there is no one in greater credit with his Lordship than he is: accordingly he said to me "Such of the English Counsellors and gentlemen of rank as were my friends I have caused to be raised to dignity and reputation by his Lordship, and Mr. George Gray and others, who, through their pride and self-sufficiency, did not consider me but bore an enmity towards me, them I have caused to be in such a manner discredited and debased that they have been turned out of their employments and are gone to Europe. In like manner Mr. Sumner, who was my enemy, I have caused to be totally disregarded and neglected. As his late Excellency looked upon me as a faithful dependent of his own, and showed me much favour,

so do you also regard me as one of your servants and well-wishers, and freely acquaint me with all your wants and by the blessing of God I will accomplish them. I am your well-wisher and I will do for you what is not in the power of any one else."

As you, my friend, are much better acquainted than I am with the situation and circumstances of persons in Calcutta, I beg you will speedily inform me, whether what Nobekissen has been telling me of his own consequence and relative to Mr. Sumner and Mr. Gray, etc., is really true or not and speedily give me your advice in what manner I should behave to him and what presents I should make him. Although he professes attachment for me and desires me to employ him in the management of my concerns ; yet as I am credibly informed that he is closely connected with the Naib (Mohamed Reza Khan) that the Naib has paid him very handsomely and is often sending him various kinds of goods and he is in consequence sincerely attached to him and is frequently engaged night and day in consultation with him, I therefore do not give any credit to the professions he makes me, nor will I knowingly suffer myself to be imposed upon. Consider this matter maturely, and write me your advice concerning it and I will act accordingly.

The substance of the letter and the tainted source from which it comes, namely Nuncomar, make it doubtful if it is genuine, and, assuming that it is genuine, if it is veracious. It was enquired into by the Committee appointed to inquire into the nature, state, and condition of the East India Company, and the Fifth Report sets forth the depositions of Mr. Francis Sykes and Lord Clive. It is best to quote the *ipsissima verba* of the distinguished deponents.

June 18, 1773, *Evidence of Francis Sykes, Esq.*

" Was you present with Lord Clive and General Carnac, the 8th of April 1766 at any visit paid to the mother of Nudjum-ul-Dowlah ?"

"I was there upon a visit with Lord Clive ; cannot recollect whether General Carnac was there or not—there was a third person."

" What passed there ?"

" After the usual compliments, the mother presented to his Lordship a teep for the sum of (I think) five lakhs of rupees, declaring at the same time that she had reserved it for his Lordship's own use by the particular request of Meer Jaffier before his decease, and that the

Nabob had intended to have presented it himself in case he had survived till his Lordship's arrival."

"Did you speak the language sufficient to understand all that was said ?"

"I did ; and was the person myself that interpreted ; there was another person present, who understood English as well as Persian ; his name was *Nobekissen*....."

Fifth Report, etc.: Evidence of Captain Swinton (p. 546) :—

"Do you believe this letter, upon viewing it with all its circumstances, to be a genuine letter from the Nabob Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Nundcomar ?"

"I have some doubts about it, but wish to consider it more at leisure before I give an opinion. I think it unlikely that the Nabob would write to Nundcomar in the style he does concerning *Nobokissen* as giving him information, which I should suppose he was well acquainted with before, Nobokissen having been long in Nundcomar's service."

"Was Nobokissen made a Rajah ?"

"I have heard so, and believe he was."

If the issues as to the genuineness and the truthfulness of the letter are left undecided, the fact can only be regretted. A certain conclusion is possible only on certain evidence, and if the available evidence is indecisive, the idea of a definite verdict must be abandoned.

Ten years before Nuncomar's case, another Hindu, not a Brahmin, however, but a *kayasth*, had been tried for forgery, convicted and sentenced to death. The Native inhabitants of Calcutta submitted two petitions praying that the prisoner might be recommended to His Majesty for mercy. The first, signed by 94 persons, is evidenced by the following record :—

At a consultation (Public Department), March 11th, 1765.

"The principal black inhabitants of the place send in the following petition in favour of Radachurn Metre under sentence of death for forgery, soliciting we would defer the execution of the same and recommend the delinquent to His Majesty for mercy.

TO THE HON'BLE JOHN SPENCER, ESQ.,
President, &c., Council at Fort William, Bengal.

The Humble Petition of the Native inhabitants of Calcutta together with Merchants, Banians, and others whose estates, interests, or habitations are in any part of the Kingdoms of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, within the jurisdiction of the English.

SHEWETH :—

That Your Petitioners, being informed of the condemnation to death of Radachurn Metre, grandson of Gobinram Metre, formerly Zemindar of Calcutta and a faithful servant of the English, for having been instrumental in writing a paper to procure him a sum of money from Coja Solomon, deceased, being under the most inexpressible affliction and grief, beg leave to throw themselves at your feet to intreat you will show mercy to the unhappy delinquent by using whatever means may occur to your goodness and humanity to save his life.

Your Petitioners humbly represent that the unhappy delinquent is one of the best families in the place who have filled confidential employs in the Honourable Company's service with fidelity to the Honourable Company and credit to themselves ; that this family is numerous and connected with many considerable families in the country ; that such an ignominious punishment as that to which the delinquent is now sentenced being inflicted upon him will draw ruin on all connected with him by the disgrace it will bring upon them ; and there is the greatest reason to apprehend the most dreadful consequences to them from the despair which from the maxims of our religion, they must be thrown into : so that in truth the punishment will not fall heavier on the delinquent han on all his friends and relations.

Your Petitioners further beg leave to remonstrate that, although the delinquent has been convicted of a great crime, yet such punishment was never known to have been inflicted for an offence of that nature in this settlement before. According to the laws of our country, his crime is never punished with death, but with a fine. The delinquent was therefore ignorant of the heinousness of the offence. Having been brought up in the religion and opinions of Hindoos, he could form no other notions of things but from their maxims and customs. These rendered his offence not mortal, and no instance had

before occurred to inform him of the severity of the English law, of the tenor and form of which the delinquent was so totally ignorant that he did not avail himself of circumstances which your Petitioners are informed would have made greatly in his favour.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly entreat that this Honourable Board will take the unhappy case of the delinquent into a merciful consideration; and that they will intercede for the delinquent with His Majesty the King of Great Britain, respecting the execution of the sentence until His Majesty's gracious pleasure is known.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray."

[94 signatures are appended, the 71st being "Nubkissen Monsie" (Munshi).]

The second, signed by 95 persons, runs as follows :—

[*January 29th*, 1766.]

"The Humble Petition of the Native Inhabitants of Calcutta, together with the Merchants, Banyans, and others whose estates, interests, or habitations are in any part of the Kingdoms of Bengal, Bahar, Orixa, within the jurisdiction of the English.

SHEWETH :—

That whereas on or about the 27th day of February last past, Radachurn Metre, grandson of Gobinderam Metre, heretofore of Calcutta, Jemmautdar (whose steady attachment and services to the English are too eminent to be so soon forgot) was condemned to death at the General Quarter Sessions for the Town of Calcutta then held on the day and date aforesaid, being indicted for and convicted of a crime of which he is entirely innocent; but for want of being acquainted with the law by which he was tried, as well as the manner of defending himself and proving his innocence is now fallen a victim to the malice of his prosecutor and his own ignorance.

Your Petitioners therefore beg leave to set forth the general consternation, astonishment, and eveu panick with which the Natives in all parts under the domination of the English are seized by this example of Radachurn Metre.....

[Here follows a long Argument on the case.]

.....Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Hon'ble Board to grant them a reversal of the said sentence, as it was pronounced out of time, and grant the prisoner a rehearal, or, if that cannot be obtained,

that they will at least respite the execution of the unhappy condemned creature till report be made thereof to His Majesty of Great Britain and his most gracious pleasure known therein. And, further, your Petitioners pray that the laws to which they are to be subject may be translated into the Bengally tongue, that they may be enabled to know what will make them obnoxious thereunto .....

Signed by 95 of the principal native inhabitants....."

["Nubkissen Moonsey" signs. The list seems substantially the same as in the previous Petition, and Nubkissen occupies practically the same position, if indeed anything depends on that.]

The petitions have a value of their own as illustrating the life and sentiments of those days, and they are also relevant as they are both signed by Nubkissen. The petitions were successful. The record proceeds :

"In order to give these people the fullest conviction of our lenity as well as justice, and in hopes that this man's condemnation will alone be a sufficient example to deter others from the commission of the like offence, which is not held so heinous in their eyes,

It is agreed to comply with their application, and that he be accordingly respited till the King's pleasure is known.

Ordered therefore that the Secretary do require from the Clerk of the Peace a copy of the proceedings of the Sessions and transmit the same together with a copy of the petition of the inhabitants in order to be laid before His Majesty."

Some idea of Nubkissen's pecuniary condition, of the extent of his revenue jurisdiction and of his general position in the country from 1766 to 1772 may be gathered from the following items of account and remarks gleaned from official records :—

Accounts of Denagepoor Districts (April 11, 1765 to April 10, 1766).

"By Charges General ... ...

Sunat Rupees.

Nobkissen, &c. ... ... 1,806-1-10"

"By money, borrowed at interest and paid to the following people, *viz:* ... ...

Sunat Rupees.

Nobokissen ... ... 4,000 ... „

PUBLIC CONSULTATION, *January* 20, 1767.

Lord Clive's statement of "Expenses General of my voyage to India."

Inter alia.

Received from Nob Kissan for 10 horses sold him	...	3,000
Do. for the following nazer jewels and dresses sold, *viz.*, sundry dresses, small jewels and pearls	...	3.000
1 pallanqueen received from the Nabob of Muradabad	...	3,000
1 pallanqueen received from the Nabob of Arcot	...	1,500
	...	10,500
Batta Spct.	...	840
	Rs.	11,340

[Probably, however, it is only the 10 horses that are meant to go to Nobkissen.]

PUBLIC CONSULTATION, *August* 26, 1768.

"Cash Account of the Province of Calcutta and 15 Dhees."

On the creditor side is this entry:

"Paid Nubkissen the amount of sundry disbursements made by him *whilst the collections were in his hands* ... ... Rs. A. P. 1,904 1 6 (Sicca Rs.)

The account is dated FORT WILLIAM, 30*th April* 1768.

The Collector General of the time was Richard Becher.

AT SELECT COMMITTEE, *April* 28, 1770.

Was submitted "Chelat account for the Bengal year 1173 or from 11th April 1766 to the 10th April 1767, being the amount of a cess collected for defraying the Annual Charge of Dresses presented to the people in public employment at the time of the Pooneah and on their receiving any new appointment." Transmitted to the Select Committee by Mr. Richard Becher, Resident at the Durbar, with other documents, Becher's covering letter being dated Moidepore, March 28, 1770.

One heading is:

"Nubkissen, Cawntoo, and people belonging to Lord Clive and Mr. Sykes:

Nubkissen ... ... 750 [Sicca rupees].

Like Account for Bengal year 1174 (=April 10, 1767 to April 11, 1768).

Nubkissen and sundry people in the service of the Resident [Mr. Sykes] :

Nubkissen	...	...	1,500 (Sicca rupees).
Gocul Gosual	...	...	1,500
Pedim Luchen, [Pudma Lochun ?] Nobkissen's Paishkar		...	125
*	*	*	*
Nubkissen's and Gocul Gosaul's Munchys			562"

Like amount for Bengal year 1175 (=April 11, 1768, to April 10, 1769)

Nobkissen does not appear under the heading of "Public Servants of Mr. Cartier and the Resident,"[1] but his naib does. Thus :

Baboo Ram Paulit	...	...	1,500 (Sicca
Pedun Luchend, [Pudma Lochun ?] Naib of Nobkissen	...	...	644 rupees).

Like amount for Bengal year 1176 (=April 11, 1769, to April 10, 1770).

"Public Servants of the Governor and Resident :

Rajah Nobkissen	...	...	1,200 (Sicca
Gocul Gosaul, etc.	...	...	1,200 rupees).

AT SELECT COMMITTEE, *June* 9, 1770.

Was read letter from Mr. Richard Becher, Resident at the Durbar, dated Moidepur, June 2, 1770.

Refering to outstanding balances, Mr. Becher writes :—"...The sum of two lakhs and twenty-five thousand rupees remains to be settled by the Rajah of Nuddea and Nobkissen, &c., farmers, when it should be paid by one party or other....."

AT SELECT COMMITTEE, *September* 15, 1770.

Read letter from Mr. Becher (date missing) enclosing certain (15) accounts, which, Mr. Becher says, "Will exhibit as clear and distinct a representation of the collections of the year 1176 [=1769-70] as it has been in my power to procure." He says:

"..... Besides the sums that have absolutely been remitted and the extra charges that have been incurred, you will see the large sum of 6,14,291-7-19-3 remain as a balance. Of this sum two lakhs and

[1] Mr. Richard Becher succeeded Mr. Sykes on January 4, 1769.

twenty-five thousand rupees is from the Province of Aukerahs or Nuddea, which the Rajah asserts was collected by Nobkissen and the other farmers whilst they had the management of the collections. Hitherto Nobkissen and the farmers have given no satisfactory answer, nor produced accounts of what they really did collect. This they certainly should be obliged to do, and to pay whatever balance may appear justly due from them; so that I flatter myself at least a great part of this sum may be recovered....."

Statement of Revenues of the Petty Mahals for the Bengal year 1177 (=1770-71), showing also the collection of the foregoing year.

Opposite the district "Issapoor," "Rajah Nobkissen" is entered in the column headed "Names of the Talookdars and Proprietors of the lands."

	Sicca rupees
"Net Revenue settled to be received for 1176 ...	4,463-13-5-0
"Collected for the year ... ... 1176 ...	4,015-14-10-0
"Remission granted on account of the Famine and dreadful calamity of the season	
"Balance for ... ... 1176 ...	447-14-15-0
"Net Revenue settled to be received in 1177 ...	4,463-13-5-0

AT A CONSULTATION, *August* 29, 1772.

"Extract from the Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit at Casimbazar, the 20th August 1772:

. . . . That the following Districts and Mahals, being in the hands of reponsible people, shall continue to pay their rents at the Khalsa, but subject to the Provincial Courts of Adawlut established at Moorshedabad, *viz.*—

Budderpore, &c.	Raja Gourdass.
Heekapore (or Hechapore), &c., &c. ...	„ Nobokissen.

CHAPTER V.

Acquisition of Sootanutty.

It appears from a petition of Raja Nubkissen, dated July 1773, that he had already been appointed Talukdar of Nowpara and some other villages. On the occasion of a resistance to the exercise of his rights as such he submitted a petition as will appear from the following proceedings :—

Extract of the Proceedings of the Khalsa of the 26th July 1773.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen :—

To the Worshipful Richard Barwell, Esq., Superintendent of the Khalsa.

The Humble Petition of Rajah Nobkissen.

Sheweth :—

That one Mullick Abdul Wayad lately complained against your Petitioner at the Khalsa, setting forth that your Petitioner was only a Waddadar, but not a Talukdar, of Noparrah, &c., villages, whereupon Philip Milner Dacres, Esq., then Superintendent, summoned your Petitioner to appear at the Khalsa and make his answer. Your Petitioner accordingly waited there, and proved by the Nabob's sunnud that he really was the present Talukdar of the said villages, and accordingly on the 7th June last a decree was given in his (your Petitioner's) favour, since which your Petitioner received a Perwannah from the said Khalsa to make the New Year's Pooneah. He dispatched the same with his people to the said villages to put it in execution. Your Petitioner's people arrived at the different villages and made the Pooneah, but at the principal village of the said Taluk the said Mullick and his people would not permit them to make the Pooneah, pretending that the said village was his the said Mullick's (Connah Barry) or dwelling-house, which surprised your Petitioner to find that he should make a dwelling-house of a village or market, the rent of which your Petitioner regularly paid to Government yearly ever since he has had the said Taluk, besides the assistance he has repeatedly given to the said Mullick, by which he is a sufferer of no less than seven or eight thousand rupees. Your Petitioner most humbly begs your Worship will be so gracious as to order the said Mullick together with his people to be brought to the Khalsa, where they may be made an example for disobeying the Perwannah and preventing your Petitioner's people from making the Pooneah.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray, and so forth.

The Superintendent referring to the Raylayan and desiring his sentiments upon it and the decree passed in the cutcherry and the usage on such occasions, he delivered them in the following words :—

Maha Rajah Nobkissen represented to the Ruler for the time being at Moorshedabad in the year 1176 to the following effect : That he was desirous of having a Tacoor Shewah, and that the means for the support of it were wanting. He therefore solicited to be granted a Talook in some place or other, the revenue of which he would pay and through such a channel should attend with content to his religious duties. The Ruler for the time, considering his representation as tending to a commendable end, favoured him with a sunnud for the Tallukdarry of Noparrah, &c. Three years are now elapsed since this happened, during which period the aforesaid Rajah has annually superintended the revenue without a single claimant appearing ; but at this time Mullick Abdul Wahed makes pretensions to the said Talluk and sets forth that Maha Rajah Nobkissen has forcibly dispossessed him. Whereas the usages of the country admit not the reversing of the orders of Rulers, Mr. Dacres having this in view, decreed Nobkissen to continue in the Taluck. If the abovementioned Mullick reflects on his former right to the Talookdarry, I submit it to you, Sir, whether the sum of 10 per cent. on the Jumma of the Malgezarry shall be fixed on him or not, and whether his houses and gardens on which there are no ryots, but simply trees, should not remain in his possession.

Upon this Report the Superintendent came to the following conclusion :—

The Superintendent observes that, whatever irregularity there may have been in the first grants, yet the length of time which has passed since those were issued, and the usages of the country in the above sentiments delivered by the Raylayan, render it necessary in established rights throughout the country not to make any deviation or alteration, but upon the most mature consideration and under the most weighty circumstances. It likewise appears that the grant obtained of this Talluck has not proceeded from any particular or private views of the person who solicited them, but merely for the support of the religious and the institution of a Tacoor Shewah ; an

RAJAH APURBA KRISHNA.

application to such an end evidently points out that no private emolument has been the object. Having premised this, the Superintendent proceeds to observe upon the other part of the Maha Rajah's sentiments, that under rights so confirmed it is usual for persons who hold them to make an allowance to such as are obliged to yield to the orders of Government—such an allowance as is estimated sufficient for their support; and that the criterion at which it is usually fixed throughout the country is 10 per cent. on the Jumma of the lands granted away, and to continue to them small allotments of ground, ten and twenty bighas, with their houses. That the Jumma of Noparrah, etc., is rupees 1,832-12-11. As this stipend, though agreeable to the custom of the country, from the smallness of the Talluck affords but a mean support and will scarely preserve the late Talukdar above the distresses of want, it is judged but equitable, as the Talook is an improving one, instead of 10 to allow 20 per cent., equal to 360 rupees per annum. Further, that whatever ground may be Kauridge, and for which he can produce proper and authenticated sunnuds under the Government seal, shall remain to him; and, to render his situation further easy, that the ground that may be specified in these sunnuds shall altogether be increased to 100 bighas; that an abstract of this proceeding be transmitted to Rajah Nobkissen:—Mullick Abdul Wahed, being called upon to answer to the complaint on account of his raising disturbance and opposing the order of Government to make the Bundabust of the ensuing year and hold the Mofussul Puneah in the village of Mullick Bung, replies that it is a separation that took place long since, and does not appertain to the Talook. Being asked to whom it pays its rents, he replies: to himself. It appears too obvious from this that he would willingly evade a compliance with the orders of Government and deprive the Talluck of a part of its rights by dividing them from the other parts. The Superintendent remarks that this is obvious, because no private collections are allowed to be made in any place without the particular order from Government; that, without he can produce some order of this nature, he cannot be entitled in any respect to the pretended right he advances of a separate collection.

On the 5th November 1777 the Board [Warren Hastings and Council] resolved "that Raja Nobkissen possesses no legal right to the villages of Nowparah, Chundaleah and Baugmullick and decreed that they are the legal inheritance of Mullick Abdul Wahed" who was to be put in possession of them. The petition of Raja Nubkissen complaining of this

order is a remarkable document. It exhibits his intelligence and capacity of reasoning, and has special interest as an autobiographical record. The petition runs as follows :—

FORT WILLIAM, *the* 18*th November* 1777.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND COUNCIL OF REVENUE.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF

MAHARAJA NABKISSEN BAHADOOR

SHEWETH :—

That on the 6th instant your petitioner received a verbal message by his Vakeel from the Superintendent of the Khalsa acquainting him that your Hon'ble Board had come to a determination to dispossess your petitioner of his Talook of Nowapara and to reinstate the former possessor, Mullick Abdul Wahed, therein.

That your petitioner wholly unacquainted with the reasons or grounds whereon such determination is founded and not conscious either of any defect in his original title or of having done any act whatsoever to vitiate or avoid the same, humbly craves leave to represent the very great hardship and severe, though he submits it, undeserved reflection such determination if carried into execution would be on him, and draw the attention of your Honorable Board to the following brief state of facts which he humbly hopes and doubts not will prevent the same : *viz.*—

That your petitioner derives his title to the Talook in question under a sunnud from Government in the Bengal year one thousand one hundred and seventy-six or English year 1769, which sunnud was duly granted to him according to the established custom of the country in consideration of his long and faithful public services as per note at the foot hereof (Reference A) and of his relinquishing at the desire of Government a grant he had before obtained of the Pergannahs Roymungal, &c., which the Hon'ble Company were about that time desirous of taking into their own hands.

That the said sunnud was afterwards, on a suit being instituted by the present claimant to set aside the same, fully recognized and examined, and duly and judicially confirmed, by two successive decrees of the Superintendents of the Khalsa, the first pronounced by Philip Milner Dacres, Esq., the 7th of June 1773, and the second by Richard

Barwell, Esq. (now a member of your Hon'ble Board) on the 26th July following, men whose abilities and experience in the laws and customs of the country, your petitioner humbly presumes, cannot be called in question ; and who were then, in virtue of their offices, invested with competent authority, and the only proper judges to act and determine in the premises.

That ever since the granting of the said sunnud your petitioner hath been in possession of the said Talook, hath duly exercised every act of ownership therein, and regularly paid all demands and revenues due in respect thereof, and confiding in the faith and justice of Government hath been at considerable expenses in improving the same and in making purchases contiguous thereto, &c.

That the granting of the said sunnud was the sole and voluntary act of Government for the good and valuable considerations aforesaid, and in conformity to the established custom of the country in similar cases, for time immemorial used, and approved (many instances hereof among numberless others which might be enumerated, your petitioner hath put down at the foot hereof Reference B) ; wherefore, and as in the obtaining the said sunnud no imposition, fraud or undue practice whatsoever either has been or can be imputed to your petitioner, and as your petitioner has ever since complied with the terms thereof, and of the said two decrees, he humbly submits to your Hon'ble Board that his right to the Talook in qustion is no ways impeachable, And

Humbly prays that your Hon'ble Board, taking the foregoing circumstances into consideration, will be pleased to revise and reconsider your proceedings aforesaid, and communicate to your petitioner in writing such things (if any) as may be alleged against his right, and afford him an opportunity of answering the same and more fully elucidating and establishing the justice of the case if it shall be thought necessary, and that in the meantime the said order of your Hon'ble Board for the dipossession of your petitioner be either suspended or annulled, as may be most consistent with justice, and as to your Hon'ble Board shall seem meet.

And your petitioner shall ever pray &c.

Note.—Your petitioner's Sunnud and the two decrees above-mentioned are herewith left for the inspection of your Hon'ble Board.

[REFERENCE A.]

[This statement of services rendered by Nubkissen to the Company from the year 1756 to the year 1767 has already been quoted and need not be here repeated.]

[REFERENCE B.]

Old Instances.

Under Jaffier Cawn (not the late Nobab of that name).—Chackla Batorea, etc., Parganna Cattah, and Tegutchy, Radshy, Sawojal, granted to Ram Jeeban Rai. All the then proprietors turned out.

Under Nabob Mahabat Jang.—Parganna Arzah, now part of Burdwan, granted to Manick Chand.

Under ditto.—Parganna of Burdah Chunder Chack, and Salimabad granted to Rajah Kerrill Chand and Raja Kissnaram, Burdwan Rajahs. Former possessors turned out.

Ditto.—Parganna Buzergomeidpoor (under Dacca), granted to Raja Rajebulleb, Sahamut Jung's Dewan.

Modern Instances.

Under Meer Jaffar's first Government.—Cooloorah, &c., villages and Talooks granted to Ram Charan Rai. The then possessor turned out, his representative still living.

Under ditto.—Four annas of the Jassore Pergannahs granted to Sala Odein Cawn, who remained in quiet possession during his life, and his widow now enjoys it. Former proprietors dispossessed.

Under ditto.—Parganna Gumgurrah, &c., granted to Anandolal, Zeminder of Mysadal. Anandolal since dead, his widow now enjoys it. The former proprietors dispossessed.

Under Meer Jaffar's first Government.—Twenty-four Pargannas granted to the Hon'ble Company, and the former proprietors all dispossessed.

Under Kassim Ally Cawn's Government.—Grant to Colonel Coote of the proprietorship of Gheretti, &c., as a Jaghir. Possession thereof ordered to be delivered to Raja Nobkissen to whom he sold it, by Company's general letter of this year.

Under ditto.—Talooks of Bassai and Barbutpoor granted to Saum Ghose, and the then proprietors, refusing to quit possession, Mr. Vansittart, the then Governor, gave his own Perwannah and sent sepoys forcibly to turn them out, pursuant to the grant, which was done accordingly. Mr. Vansittart's original Perwannah is herewith left.

Under ditto.—Perwanna Beerah, &c., granted to Ram Charn Rai. The then possessors turned out, and Ram Charn's son now in possession.

Under ditto.—Mauncunda, &c., villages, granted to Sanker Dutt, Madan Dutt's brother. Former possessors turned out.

Meer Jaffar's second Government.—Badoor, &c., Parganna granted to Raja Nun Coomer. The then possessor turned out.

Nabob Seiful Dowlah.—Natpoor villages, &c. (part of Jessore) and Talook Meergodai, granted to Hari Kissen Tacoor, and the then possessors turned out.

Nundo Coomar was turned out by Lord Clive, and Sankar Dutt by Becher—both reinstated, &c., Nundo Coomar by Mr. Verelst, and Sankar Dutt by Mr. Cartier, and now remaining in possession.

(Sd.) NOBKISSEN.

The discussion of the petition and the resolution on it will show that Nubkissen's honour was saved. It was decided to reverse an irregular act of Government, but it was also declared that this decision was not to be taken as a judgment passed against Nubkissen for any oppression or other malpractice. It was determined also to grant a compensation to the Raja for the deprivation of the grant which had been made to him. The following papers embody the result :—

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

I am sensible of the justice of Mr. Barwell's arguments so far as they respect Raja Nobkissen, and the formal act of Government passed in his favour ; but I cannot admit of it in competition with positive justice. The injustice done to Raja Nobokissen originated with the grant which it was not in the power of Government to secure to him, because it was against law. It was an infringement of the rights of property confirmed by a possession of 125 years, as I am well informed, and could exist no longer than the duration of the influence which gave rise to it. It is therefore my opinion, in which I persuade myself Mr. Barwell will concur, that the decree of the 5th November do stand confirmed, but that at the same time a declaration be given in writing under the order of the Board by the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records, to both the parties, that this act is the reversal of an irregular act of Government, not a judgment passed against Raja Nobkissen in consequence of any oppression which may be imputed to him for it; and if it shall be the sense of the Board that a compensation should be made to Raja Nobkissen for the deprivation of the grant which was made to him and intended as the reward of the public services, that this Declaration be made to him at the same time.

MR. FRANCIS.

I think that the Resolution of the 5th November must stand confirmed, and that the Talookdar must have his right if he insists on it. I acquiesce in the declarations proposed to be made to Raja Nobkissen, and as I understand the property is very inconsiderable, I suppose it would not be difficult to give him a compensation for it. But I do not admit of this as a precedent, and shall invariably consider every case as it comes before us on its own merits.

MR. BARWELL.

I entirely concur in the sentiments delivered by Mr. Francis.

RESOLUTION.

Resolved that the Decree of the 5th of November do stand confirmed, but that at the same time a declaration be given in writing under the order of the Board by the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records, to both the parties that this act is the reversal of an irregular act of Government, not a judgment passed against Raja Nobkissen, in consequence of any oppression, which may be imputed to him for it, and that a compensation will be made to Raja Nobkissen for the deprivation of the grant which was made him and intended as the reward of his public services.

ORDER OF THE KHALSA.

Ordered that the Superintendent of the Khalsa be advised accordingly and that he be directed to report, if any, and what compensation can be made and accepted by either of the parties and the justice of Government vindicated to both.

This was naturally followed by a petition from Nubkissen asking for a valuation of the property he had lost and for the grant of adequate compensation.

FORT WILLIAM, *the 5th December* 1777.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen :—

To

THE HON'BLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.,
Governor-General, and Members of the Council of Revenue.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF RAJAH NOBOKISSEN.

SHEWETH:—

Your petitioner humbly begs leave to represent that on being favored with the Hon'ble Board's Decree of the 18th November he presumed to prefer a petition to your Honours requesting a valuation to be made of the Talook of Nowparah. The reason for

this request was that your justice might determine on a compensation equivalent to the present value of the said Talook, and that at the same time the execution of your Decree might be complete in all its parts, both in what related to your petitioner's yielding up the said Talook, and to his receiving an equivalent from Government.

As that part of your Decree which relates to his yielding up the Talook has taken effect, and your petitioner has received the orders of the gentlemen of the Calcutta Committee, he now humbly prays you may, consonant to the justice of your decision, be further pleased to send a peremptory order to the gentlemen of the Committee to put him in possession of some parcel of the Company's owa lands; and that no difficulty may arise in the execution of your commands, your petitioner begs the indulgence for pointing out Sootalutty, its Haut and Bazar, and Baug Bazar and its Sayr ; as a just and equitable compensation at the same rate of revenue of 1,832 rupees per annum, which is the Sudder Jumma of the said Talook.

Your petitioner humbly hopes the Hon'ble Board will consider the circumstances of his case, that while one part of their decision operates against him, if the other part which is to operate in his favor is not now enforced, their justice will be incomplete, and that in the eyes of the whole country he will appear under their displeasure, for the act of taking from him a gift the Government had once made will be notorious, and his fair name will suffer, unless it is vindicated by an immediate and similar gift from the rulers.

For these reasons your humble petitioner has adventured to point out what he will willingly and gratefully receive as an equivalent for that gift your honours are pleased to change, though the value of it may be rather under what he drew from Nowparah in the improved state to which he brought it, yet if on a Jeriff of Nowparah your Honours may conceive he has rated it too high, he hereby agrees to pay such additional revenue for the land he requests as shall make it a bare compensation for the lands he yields up. This he engages to do that no obstacles may arise to his being put into immediate possession or to the drawing out the necessary sunnud should your Honours be so pleased.

And Your Petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray,

(Sd.) NOBKISSEN.

The following papers set forth the deliberations and the conclusion:—

Read again the Board's Resolution of the 18th November regarding Rajah Nobkissen.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

As the Board are bound by a promise very solemnly made to Nobkissen to grant him an equivalent for the land of which he has been deprived by a judicial Decree, I myself shall very readily agree to his proposal, because it cannot affect the property or rights of others, but as I understand that Rajah Nobkissen still retains possession of the Talooks of Nawporrah, &c., I hope that whatever may be the Resolution of the Board respecting the compensation which is to be made to him, the execution and even the notification of it may remain suspended, until justice shall have had its course and he shall have yielded up the possession of these Talooks of Nowporrah, &c., to the lawful owner. Upon this occasion I think it necessary to remark that the Resolution of the Board of the 18th November expresses a meaning in some respect different from mine, although in justice to the Secretary I must add that to the best of my recollection it was dictated by me, and the error I am willing to take upon myself. The words are: "Ordered that the Superintendent of the Khalsa be advised accordingly and that he be directed to report if any and what compensation can be made and accepted by either of the parties and the justice of Government vindicated to both." This implies that a proposal should be made to each party to yield up his right of possession. I had no idea of prevailing upon Abdul Wahed to resign his right, nor that anything more was necessary than to make a compensation to Raja Nobkissen for his loss. This is not material, but I hope I shall be excused in having taken up so much of the time of the Board in this explanation, as in a judicial question I would wish that nothing may appear as my opinion which is not strictly conformable to it.

MR. FRANCIS:

The Resolution of the Board of the 18th November is right, but the order to the Superintendent of the Khalsa goes beyond the terms of the Resolution. I do not think it material.

MR. BARWELL

I understand from the petition before us that the decision, so far as it relates to the establishing the former Talukdar in his rights has taken effect, and is now in course of execution. If this is so, I think the Committee should be ordered to put Nobkissen in possession, but not otherwise as proposed by the Governor.

Resolved that the Committee of Revenue be directed to put Rajah Nobkissen in possession of Sootalutty, its Haut and Bazar and Baug Bazar and its Sayr at the rate of rupees 1,832, the Suddar Jumma

of the Talook of Nawparah decreed to Mullick Abdul Wahed on the 5th November 1777, and if on a Zeriff of the Talook it shall be found that the grant exceeds the value of the Talook, in such case Raja Nobkissen stands engaged for, and is to pay, such additional Revenue as shall make the said Grant a bare equivalent for the lands of which he is dispossessed.

Agreed that this Resolution be transmitted to the Calcutta Committee with the following Letter :—

To

MR. JOHN HOLME,

President, etc., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta

GENTLEMEN,

We herewith transmit you a copy of our Resolution passed on this day, on a petition which has been presented to us on behalf of Rajah Nobkissen, which we direct you to carry into execution as soon as he shall have yielded up the possession of the Talook of Nowparah, etc., to the lawful owner, until which time the execution, and even the notification of it, is to remain suspended.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servants,

FORT WILLIAM,
The 5th December 1777.

(Sd.) WARREN HASTINGS,
(Sd.) RCHD. BARWELL,
(Sd.) P. FRANCIS.

On the 6th of January 1778 Raja Nobkissen submitted a petition praying for a sunnud for the mouzah of Sootanutty, &c., possession of which had been decreed to him in lieu of mouzah Nowparah. After some correspondence the sunnud was granted. Details of the proceedings are set forth in the following papers :—

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), *January 6th*, 1778.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen :—

Translation of a Petition from Rajah Nobkissen.

"As I have not yet received a Sunnud from the Committee for the Mouzah of Sootalutty, &c., which the Council were pleased to grant me in lieu of Mouzah Nowaparah, and as I am apprehensive of further difficulties arising to prevent me from obtaining one, I pray that fresh orders may be given to the Committee to grant me the Sunnud, as also that they may be desired not to give Pattahs for any ground within the said Mahals, that disputes may not be occasioned hereafter.

Agreed that a copy thereof with the following letter be transmitted to the Calcutta Committee:

To

MR. JOHN HOLME,

President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.

GENTLEMEN,

We herewith transmit you the copy of a Petition which has been presented to us by Rajah Nobekissen and desire you will not give Pattahs for any ground within the Mahals granted to Rajah Nobkissen.

FORT WILLIAM, We are, &c.
6*th January* 1778.

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), 16*th January* 1778.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S MINUTE.

"I observe the draft of Sunnud to Rajah Nobkissen, laid before the Board last Council day, is not drawn out agreeably to form, as it includes his engagement to make good any overplus which may appear to be thereby given him on a valuation of the villages of Nowparrah, &c., before held by him. I am of opinion and move that the Sunnud be granted according to the accompanying form, in which the above clause is omitted, and that a Muchulka may be taken that if the present grant exceed the rents of Nowparrah, he will make up the difference.

[*Form of Sunnud.*]

Be it known to all Mutsuddies in present employ, or who hereafter may be Canongoes, Ryotts, Husbandmen, &c., &c., &c., of the Mal and Syer of the village Sootalootie and Baug Bazar and Hogulkoondee, that the Talookdarry of the above villages, their Mal and Syer, according to the particulars hereunto annexed, are in exchange for the villages Nopoorah, &c., granted to the high and powerful Mahah Rajah Nobkissen Bahadre, to take place from the beginning of the Bengal year 1184, and the said Rajah Nobkissen on his part shall do whatever shall be necessary and proper and customary for the benefit of the said Talookdarry, conducting himself upon the principles of justice, and in no wise neglect to give his attention and care in this respect; and he shall so behave himself as to secure the satisfaction and content of the Ryotts and other inhabitants, and by his good management cause a daily increase of husbandry and prosperity, and shall regularly and punctually pay a fixed annual jumma for the same (excepting Ram Bazar and Roy Bazar) of 1,237-13-10 exclusive of the Chowkidary Tax.

And the abovementioned Mutsuddies, Ryots, &c., &c., &c., shall acknowledge him as the proper Talookdar, and not deviate in the least instance from his proper and legal orders or counsels, nor require of him a new Sunnud every year, and in this respect they must be attentive and obey.

Original Jumma	... 1,832	0	0				
Jumma of Ram Bazar, &c., to be deducted...	594	2	10,	*viz.*	Ram Bazar	441	2 10
					Raja Bazar	150	0 0
Jumma of Sootalooty, &c.	1,237	13	10				

Particulars.

The whole village of Sootalooty, &c., 5 Mahals, *viz:*—

Mal	...	1 Mahal
Haut Sootalooty ...	...	1 „
Bazar do.	...	1 „
Soobah Bazar	...	1 „
Charles Bazar	...	1 „
Baug Bazar, &c. ...	...	2 Mahals
Baug Bazar	...	1 „
Hoogulkoondee ...	...	1 „

Ordered that the Sunnud be granted, and that Rajah Nobkissen be required to execute a Muchulka.

Agreed therefore that the following letter be written to the Calcutta Committee.

To

MR. JOHN HOLME,

President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.

GENTLEMEN,

Enclosed we transmit you a copy of the Sunnud which we have this day granted to Maharajah Nobkissen, and desire you will see that the same has its full effect; taking from him a Muchulka that if the present grant exceeds the rents of Nowparrah, &c., he will make up the difference.

FORT WILLIAM, We are, &c.

16*th January* 1778.

Sootanutty at the present day is only a name, and it is worth while inquiring what it meant and included at the time it was granted to Nubkissen. The Committee having called upon the "Duan" [Dewan or Accountant] to report

"what particular Mahals and Bazars fall within Sootanutty Mahal, its Haut and Bazar, Baug Bazar and Syer, specifying the annual Jumma of each for the preceding 5 years and the present year," an elaborate report was submitted. The following may be left to speak for itself :—

AT A COMMITTEE (CALC. REV. COM. CONS.) *December* 29, 1777.

The Accomptant lays before the Committee a Jumma Wasil Bakey Account of the Hauts and Bazars of Calcutta for the present year, agreeable to their orders of the 24th instant, and the Committee proceed to examine the state thereof.

		Jumma of 1189.	Kist to the end of Poose.	Collected.	Balance.
SootaNutty Etmondar	Becharam Mundle..	16,689 14 9	8,345 0 0	3,524	4,821 0 0
Bogbuzar do. .. [Baug-Bazar.]	Ottaram Metre ..	1,112 9 4	556 4 0	180	376 4 0
Charles Buzar Ezardar	Bholanaut Chatterji	800 0 0	533 8 0	74	459 8 0
Hauts Sootanutty do...	Sosteyram ..	2,640 0 0	1,693 4 0	914	779 4 0
Ram Buzar do. ..	Nainah Babu ..	701 0 0	467 0 0	409	58 0 0
Sobah Buzar do. ..	Rajah Nubkissen ..	500 0 0	333 8 0	448	85 8 0

Same day the Accomptant lays before the Committee Jumma Wasil Bakey Account of the Land Rents and Chowkeydarry Tax of the Town of Calcutta for the Bengal years 1179-1184.

MAHALS.	Etmondars.	Cazannah or Rent.	Chowkeydarry Tax.	Total Balance.
1179.				
Soottanutty	Becharam Mundle	321 9 17	.....	321 9 17
Bog-Busar	Ottaram Metre ..	....	.....	.....
1180.				
Soottanutty	Becharam Mundle	398 11 14	869 13 6	1,268 0 0
Bog-Busar	Ottaram Metre ..	17 0 14	48 8 15	65 9 9
SHAIR:				
Haut Soottanutty ..	Jogornaut Ganumah	62 15 10	.....	62 15 10
Charles Buzar ..	Do. Do.	93 0 0	139 14 0	232 14 0
Sobah Buzar ..	Kesmomohun Belcottah ..	168 0 0	66 6 10	234 6 10

MAHALS.	Etmondars.	Cazannah or Rent.	Chowkeydarry Tax.	Total Balance.
1181.				
Soottanutty	Becharam Mundle	445 13 15	1,157 15 8	1,603 13 3
Bog-Buzar	Ottaram Metre ..	7 6 11	37 1 13	44 8 4
SHAIR:				
Bow-Buzar	Nounah Baboo ..	0 0 10	.....	0 0 10
Ram-Buzar	Durgapersaud Soocool	52 7 15	57 12 5	110 4 0
1182.				
Soottanutty	Becharam Mundle	410 7 19	1,132 8 8	1,543 7 0
Bog-Buzar, &c. .	Ottaram Metre ..	36 3 9	53 13 8	90 17 0
SHAIR:				
Haut Sootanutty ..	Devey Sing ..	66 10 5	10 13 5	77 7 10
Ram-Buzar	Nannah Baboo ..	.....	.....	.....
Bow-Buzar	Ramnarain Mozoomdar ..	.....	.....	.....
Charles Buzar	Sereydhur Tagore..	450 7 10	134 11 10	585 3 0
Sobah Buzar	Rajah Nubkisren ..	.....	.....	.....
1183.				
Sootanutty	Becharam Mundle..	457 13 1	1,499 4 18	1,951 1 19
Bog-Buzar	Ottaram Metre ..	84 1 6	108 5 8	192 6 14
SHAIR:				
Sobah Buzar	Rajah Nubkissen ..	85 12 15	46 3 5	132 0 0

A further Report submitted by the same officer is embodied in the following proceedings: –

AT A COMMITTEE (CALCUTTA REVENUE COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS.)

December 30th, 1777.

The President acquaints the Committee that he attended at the Council-House this morning by order from the Secretary of the Revenue Department, and was directed to draw out the sunnud authenticating the grant made to Rajah Nobkissen in compensation for Nowparrah immediately and to include therein the Bazars, &c., appertaining to Sootanutty, except Ram Bazar and Radge Bazar, the rent whereof are by the Board's orders of the 19th instant to be paid direct to the Huzzoor. Agreeable thereto, the President now lays

before the Committee the form of the grant which the Naib Duan has prepared, which, if they approve, he will direct to be issued to Nobkissen forthwith.

The Duan being also called upon for his Report, ordered yesterday, respecting these Bazars, now lays it before the Committee, and observes that the lands of Soubah Bazar, Ram Bazar, Haut Sootanutty, and Charles Bazar, are included in the Districts or Village of Sootanutty.

Jumma of Sootanuty, &c., for the following years :—

Sootanutty Tooll	1179.	1180.	1181.	1182.	1183.	Total.
Atmamdars ..	6,930 8 14	6,921 12 14	6,926 8 10	6,933 11 19	7,177 11 11	34,890 5 8
Sobasar Tooll						
Hoozoory ..	150 0 0	251 0 0	316 12 15	316 12 15	316 12 15	1,351 6 5
Rambazar ..	370 0 0	400 0 0	444 2 10	444 2 10	444 2 10	2,102 7 10
Haut Suttanutty	1,400 0 0	1,500 0 0	1,452 4 0	1,886 4 0	1,961 4 0	8,199 12 0
Bazar Suttanutty ..	360 0 0	385 0 0	316 12 15	586 12 15	596 12 15	2,245 6 5
Charles Bazar ..	410 0 0	450 0 0	269 4 10	569 4 10	569 4 10	2,267 13 0
Total ..	9,620 8 14	9,907 12 14	9,725 3 0	10,737 0 9	1,066 0 1	51,057 2 18
Bogbazar Tooll						
Atmamdar ..	446 2 13	446 4 4	447 15 6	449 3 9	492 4 6	2,281 13 18
Kaje Gunge						
Tooll Hoozoory	....	150 0 0	150 0 0	150 0 0	150 0 0	600 0 0
Total .	446 2 13	596 4 4	597 15 6	599 3 9	642 4 6	2,881 13 18
Brought down	9,620 8 14	9,907 12 14	9,725 13 0	10,737 0 9	11,066 0 1	51,057 2 18
Total Rupees ..	10,066 11 7	10,504 0 18	10,323 12 6	11,336 3 18	11,708 4 7	53,939 0 1

Ordered that the Sunnud be translated against the next meeting.

The grant of Sootanutty to Nubkissen called forth a protest from the "inhabitants and landholders of Sootanutty and Baug Bazar." The orders passed on the petition were firm but conciliatory. The original documents may be interesting.

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), *January* 23, 1778.

Read the following petition from the inhabitants and landholders of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar.

"To THE HONOURABLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQR.,
Governor-General, &c., Council of Revenue at Fort William in Bengal.

The Humble Petition and Remonstrance of the Inhabitants and Landholders of the Districts of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar in the Town of Calcutta

HUMBLY SEHWETH:—

That your Petitioners have been from time immemorial Inhabitants and Landholders in the Districts of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar in the Town of Calcutta by virtue of several Pottahs or grants which have been granted and renewed from time to time by the Honourable East India Company at a certain quit-rent payable quarterly as appears by the Pottahs and Receipts for the Rents in their possession, and were never Tenants or Reiots to any other person for the same except the Honourable Company; and, standing in that relation to the Honourable Company, your Petitioners have been incouraged to improve and build upon the lands which have been granted to them as aforesaid, confiding in the security they enjoy under this Government and the little danger they had to apprehend of their lands being assigned over to any other person. And your Petitioners being so proprietors of their lands and houses have been allowed the liberty of disposing of them with the approbation of the Company and of exercising every other right of property over them which they might think fit. Notwithstanding which, your Petitioners, to their inexpressible concern, have lately been given to understand that the above Districts will be shortly made over by an order of the Huzzoor to Rajah Nobkissen as his Talook, which will tend greatly to prejudice them in the certainty of their possession, and will probably heap upon them a load of oppressions, grievances, and extortions; and the more so as the said Rajah Nobkissen will thereby become a judge in his own Districts, and they must be under the necessity of applying to his Court for justice.

And your Petitioners humbly apprehend that, as they have received Pottahs from the East India Company to hold of them under a certain rent, it would be unjust to assign over the said lands to any other person and thereby subject them to such innovations and oppressions which that person may think proper to introduce; and likewise that as the absolute property of the said lands has been granted to

them under the said Pottahs while they pay their rent, your Petitioners are advised and humbly apprehend it would be highly contrary to right to introduce any new species of tenure.

Your Petitioners therefore most humbly pray that your Honour, &c., will be graciously pleased to take the premises into consideration and permit them to remain in their properties upon the same terms and conditions as they have hitherto done, paying the stipulated rents to the Honourable the East India Company, and that your Petitioners may continue to be looked upon as tenants to the Honourable the East India Company and no one else.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c., &c."

(SD.) [169 Signatures.]

Ordered that the Secretary to inform the Petitioners that the Board did not, nor do, intend by the Sunnud lately granted to Rajah Nobkissen to invest him with any rights or privileges or customs but such as were before possessed and exercised by the Company. That he has no power to oppress, or to exact new taxes, or to erect a Court of justice, nor can the Board understand whence such suspicions have arisen. It is their will that the dues of the Company which they have thought it proper to transfer to Rajah Nobkissen shall be paid into his hands as the immediate proprietor instead of being paid, as they formerly were, into the hands of an Agent on the part of the Company, and to this the Board require their obedience.

Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to the principal of the Petitioners and another to Nobkissen himself.

A narrative of the proceedings which led to the enlargement of Nubkissen's possessions has led to the omission from its proper place, in chronological order, of a fact which shows the growing confidence of the English authorities in his intelligence and honesty. The position which Nubkissen had acquired, the esteem in which he was held by high officials and the confidence which was reposed in him, were abiding and not evanescent. On the 21st December 1775 the Governor-General laid before the Board a letter from Bow Begum, mother of the Nabob Asaph-ud-Dowla, received by his servant Coja Shagoon Ally Cawn, in which she complained of some acts of high-handedness of

MAHARAJA KAMUL KRISHNA.

Mr. Bristow regarding the statement of the income and also his interference with the usual ceremonies of her estate which were enjoined on her by the customs of her family. He also laid before the Board the reply of Mr. Bristow to those charges. Lieutenant-General John Clavering thought that two gentlemen properly qualified must be appointed to enquire into the matter and report thereon. Warren Hastings considered the reply of Mr. Bristow to be conclusive and said the matter might be safely disposed of against the Bow Begum. Sir Philip Francis strongly objected to this mode of procedure, insisted on an enquiry by two gentlemen, "and one of them," he said, "must be Raja Nobkissen; he is well versed in Persian and is well acquainted with the customs of the country and he may be very safely relied on by the Government." Mr. Barwell observed: "I agree to this arrangement. Raja Nobkissen is a proper native who may be entrusted with this transaction." Mr. Monson questioning Nubkissen's qualification on the ground of his being a Hindoo, Mr. Barwell answered: "He is profoundly learned in Persian and most of the customs of the Mahomedans are based on the Persian Scriptures; besides, Raja Nobkissen is a man of vast experience and his repeated intercourse with the Nawab of Murshidabad had made him a quite competent man for the purpose." Nubkissen was accordingly appointed a member of the Committee of Inquiry.

A similar commission was entrusted to him shortly after the grant of the sunnud for Sootanutty. There were suspicions of a conspiracy, and Raja Nubkissen was appointed to make an enquiry and submit a report. All the necessary facts will appear from the following papers :—

AT A COUNCIL (SECRET DEPARTMENT), *February* 2, 1778.—

Minute by Governor-General (W. HASTINGS) *relative to* JUGG MOHAN DUTT: *inter alia*—

..." He received information in October last, that a man named Jugg Mohun Dutt, a near relation of the Sircar of Mr. Chevalier, the

French Commandant, used daily to frequent the house of Lall Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, and to hold very long and secret conferences with him. Having taken the proper means to ascertain the truth of this information, the Governor-General gave order for his being apprehended and brought before him; but these were not executed, the man soon after falling sick, till yesterday morning, when he was taken coming from the house and before the door of Lalla Sevuck Ram." Questioned by G. G.; denied intercourse with L. S. Ram. G. G., confirmed in his suspicions, sent Dutt "to the New Fort under a guard and caused all the papers in his house to be seized and sealed in the presence of creditable [? credible] witnesses, and to be brought to his house, where they now remain."

He now proposes "that persons properly qualified may be nominated to examine the papers now under his charge, and for that purpose that each member of the Board will be pleased to appoint a person versed in the Bengal language (in which the papers are mostly written) to meet at the Governor's House and jointly inspect them, and to take the reports of the evidences of this transaction."

Mr. Francis's Minute:—"Agrees, but can only suggest Mr. Moore as qualified to examine the papers."

Mr. Barwell's Minute:—"I approve, and think Raja Nubkissen ought to be present at the inspection of the Bengal papers."

Mr. Wheler was unable to recommend any one.

Then :—"The Governor-General having ordered the papers which were seized to the Council House, and Moore and Rajah Nobkissen attending, they are delivered to them, with directions to select such as have any relation to conferences or concerns with Lalla Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, and to deliver back the others immediately to the owner, Jug Mohun Dutt.

"Mr. Moore and Rajah Nobkissen, having examined the papers of Jug Mohun Dutt in his presence, inform the Board that they contain nothing but accounts and papers relative to his own concerns, but no letters received or copies of letters written by him, and, having put several questions to him on the subject of his frequent visits to Lalla Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, they deliver them in with his answers as follow :

* * * * * * *

"*Ordered* that Jug Mohun Dutt be remanded to the Fort, to continue in confinement there till further orders."

This was not held to be conclusive, and a further inquiry was ordered and held. The proceedings are reported as follows :—

AT A COUNCIL (SECRET DEPARTMENT), *Monday, February* 23, 1778.

Ordered that an abstract of examinations of various persons "respecting the visits of Jugg Mohun Dutt to the Mahratta Vakil" (Lalla Sewuk Ram) be entered, the full examinations being "very voluminous. ... .

"*Ordered* that the Secretary do call on Mr. Moore and Rajah Nobkissen to deliver any further information which they may have received respecting Jugg Mohun Dutt."

The Governor-General's (W. Hastings's) speech on the points repeats that he had caused the Vakil's papers to be seized with a view to the discovery of proofs of intrigue. He says :—

"I understand from Rajah Nobkissen that there was not a single letter of any kind among the papers that were seized and of which he had the inspection."

AT A COUNCIL (SECRET DEPARTMENT), *Monday, March* 2, 1778.

Read the following letter from Mr. Moore:

HON'BLE SIR AND SIRS,

In pursuance of your directions to obtain information whether Jagamohun Dutt has any and what connection with the banian of Monsieur Chevalier, the Chief of Chandernagore, Rajah Nobkissen undertook to make the necessary enquiries, and, having furnished me with the result thereof, I beg leave to communicate it to you.

"Jagamohan Dutt has five cousins, who are brothers, *viz.* Ramnaut Dutt, Ram Mohan Dutt, Nilmoney Dutt, Monoo Dutt, and Roy Churun Dutt, of whom Ramnant Dutt and Ram Mohan Dutt are in the service of Monsieur Chevalier as pycars, and support an intercourse with Jagamohun Dutt between Chandernagore and Calcutta.

"Rajah Nobkissen having personally enquired of Atter Ally Cawn[1] whether Jagamohun Dutt had applied to him to be introduced to Lallo Sabuckram, he informed him that he had ; that, on asking his reason for wishing the introduction, Jagamohun told him that he had occasion to send some letters into the Mahratta country, and

[1] Said by Jugg Mohun Dutt, in his answers to be "a Doctor in Calcutta," to whom he applied for an introduction to Lalloo Sabuckram (Lalla Sevuck Ram).

therefore was desirous of becoming acquainted with Lallo Sabuckram ; but that Atter Ally Cawn, at the mention of the Mahrattas, being somewhat apprehensive of the consequences, declined the introduction.

"This is the substance of Rajah Nobkissen's information to me this morning. He is still prosecuting his enquiries ; and the result thereof shall be regularly communicated to you as I receive it.

FORT WILLIAM, I am, &c.,
25th February 1778. (Sd.) P. MOORE.

"The Secretary acquaints the Board that he called on Rajah Nobkissen and received from him almost a repetition of the above information, which he lays before the Board as follows :—

"Rajah Nobkissen, attending the Secretary, acquainted him that during the time of Jug Mohun Dutt's examination before him he declared that he had desired to be introduced to Lall Sewuck Ram by Atter Ally Cawn. Nobkissen has since been informed by Atter Ally Cawn that Jug Mohun Dutt did earnestly request to be introduced by him to the Mahratta Vakil on account of some business of importance which he said he had with him, and when he was asked as to the nature of his business, he replied that he wanted to send a letter into the Deccan, but Atter Ally Cawn was deterred by this declaration from introducing him and denied his request.

"Nobkissen further acquaints the Secretary that Sam Dutt, Mannick Dutt, and Bujoo Kissen Dutt, all deceased, were three brothers ; that the former left five sons, who all reside at Chandernagore ; that the prisoner, Jug Mohun Dutt, who is the only son of the second brother, resides at Calcutta ; that the third brother had one son, named Anund Dutt, who is also a resident of Calcutta. Nobkissen, having sent a person to Chandanagore to make private enquiries into the occupations of these several persons and to bring him any further intelligence in his power respecting their connexions with each other, obtained from him the following information : That Ramnath Dutt and Rammohun Dutt, two of the five sons by the eldest brother, are pycars in the employment of Mr. Chevalier, and indebted to him ; that they frequently came backwards and forwards to Calcutta, and take up their residence at Jug Mohun Dutt's house. He expects further intelligence on this subject and will communicate it without delay."

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL :—"I think it necessary to add to the above report that Rajah Nobkissen, when he was before the Board,

observed that, although it appeared from the papers of Jug Mohun Dutt that he had commercial dealings to the amount of (I think) thirteen lakhs of rupees, not a single letter either in business or of any other kind appeared among the papers which were seized, nor his cullundaun or standish, in which it is customary to keep papers of a secret or important nature, from which circumstance, which he mentioned as very extraordinary, he drew the conclusion that Jug Mohun Dutt must have given early orders for their being secreted for fear of a discovery. I do not know whether the members of the Board may recollect this part of Nobkissen's information, but I think it necessary to record it, and to declare that I consider it as a confirmation of my suspicions. . . . . ."

Though the Governor-General did not abandon his suspicions, nothing further was heard of the conspiracy, nothing untoward happened. Possibly if any mischief was brewing, it was arrested and crushed by the very inquiry that was held.

CHAPTER VI.

NUNCOMAR.

An important fact worth considering at this stage of Nubkissen's life is the nature of his relations to Maharaja Nuncomar and the part he took in the case that will be for ever associated not only with the memory of many distinguished individuals, but with many angry disputes and recriminations concerning the integrity of Judges and Councillors in the early days of British administration in this country. As this work professes to be not the history of a period, but only the biography of an individual, it is only necessary to say as much of Nuncomar and his case as brings him into relations with Nubkissen. At the same time Nuncomar played such a conspicuous part in the early history of British rule, and his career and character have suggested, to so many English writers, reflections on the character of the Bengalee in general and the Brahmin in particular, that it will not be altogether out of place to take a somewhat wider view of his life than that presented by its points of contact with the life of Nubkissen. There is another reason for attempting a little study of Nuncomar. History as written by eminent Englishmen in recent times after elaborate research, as written, for instance, by Sir James Stephen, Colonel Malleson, and Mr. Forrest, has, in the eyes of impartial readers at any rate, delivered its final verdict on Nuncomar and his trial for forgery. The impression left on the mind of the last generation by the flaming periods of Burke, the ponderous pages of Mill, and the brilliant portraits of Macaulay, cannot but suffer to-day a large degree of effacement. But there are those who will not see, who love to hug an illusion that is beautiful, and who with little ceremony or scarcely an apology dismiss facts that are repellent to the

taste. Some recent Bengalee writers have made a hero of Nuncomar. They have represented him as the victim of a conspiracy led by Warren Hastings who employed Impey as his instrument for a judicial murder. Nuncomar was, in their judgment, a martyr to his patriotism. He was not only a social leader of the Brahmins, but the political leader of the entire Hindu community in Bengal, if not of the native population generally. Round him Hindu interests and forces were to rally, or at any rate the decaying strength of Mahomedan rulers was to revive; and he was to stand forth as the deliverer of his native land from a foreign yoke and the founder of a united nation and state. Nubkissen, on the other hand, was, in the light vouchsafed to these writers, a sneak and a coward, a trimmer and traitor who betrayed native interests, and delivered his country, so far as it lay in his little power, into the hands of the English. He abetted Hastings in his attempt to remove his chief accuser and witness of guilt, Nuncomar. By giving false evidence he abetted Impey in his judicial murder.

All this view of Nuncomar is excellent romance; it is not history. The writers have very largely drawn on their imagination. They have at once ignored and created history. Nuncomar at his best was a shrewd, worldly man of business, the mediocre character of whose abilities and the modesty of whose social position are proved by the fact that he did not make a prominent appearance or occupy a distinguished position in public life before he was past fifty. Taken all round he was an ambitious, scheming, intriguing villain, absolutely selfish, thoroughly unprincipled, dead to a sense of gratitude, prone to abuse of power, faithless as a friend, implacable as an enemy. Almost the whole of his public life is a tissue of crimes,—extortion, conspiracy, giving bribes, taking bribes, making false complaints, getting up false cases, perjury, subornation of perjury, forgery, the uttering of forged documents, and the like. His public life had nothing

of public spirit in it. His ambition was wholly personal. The solitary instance of faithfulness in his whole life was his attachment to Mir Jaffir, but even in the service of that potentate he seems to have had no thought except that of self-aggrandisement. He never appears to have excelled in diplomacy or administration, and if he had any influence over Mir Jaffir, if he shaped his policy and guided his counsels, the best index to his honesty, wisdom and foresight would be the acts of Mir Jaffir himself, to which a brief reference will presently be made, and which, it may be observed in the meanwhile, exhibit very little of either firmness or fairness. In character and aspirations Nubkissen was the very antithesis of Nuncomar.

The testimony of the best writers in regard to the character of Nuncomar is unanimous. Macaulay, who will not be suspected of any prejudice in favour of Hastings or Impey or of any lack of sympathy with Nuncomar in his distress, speaks of him in the following terms :—

"Of his moral character it is difficult to give a notion to those who are acquainted with human nature only as it appears in our island. What the Italian is to the Englishman, what the Hindu is to the Italian, what the Bengalee is to other Hindus, such was Nuncomar to other Bengalees."

Then follows his well-known description of Bengalees. Sir James Stephen considers this estimate to be exaggerated in its condemnation. He finds an explanation of Nuncomar's character in the circumstances of the time and the place in which he lived. His own opinion may be taken as marked by that "discriminating good sense" the absence of which he regrets in Macaulay's description, and that opinion is expressed as follows :—

"Of all the provinces of the Empire none was so degraded as Bengal, and till he was nearly sixty years old Nuncomar lived in the worst and most degraded part of that unhappy Province. A pushing, active, prominent, successful man in such circumstances could hardly be other than Nuncomar actually was, false all through, and

dead to every sentiment except pride, hatred and revenge. It is, however, due to Nuncomar to say that even a bitter enemy gives him credit for one good quality. "He was," says the author of the *Siyyar ul Mutaqherin*, "a man of a wicked disposition and a haughty temper, envious to a high degree, and on bad terms with the greater part of mankind, although he had conferred favours on two or three men and was firm in his attachments."

Colonel Malleson, apparently thrown beside himself by the shocking record of Nuncomar's intrigues, goes on to generalise about his race :

"It [Murshidabad] still remained, however, a hotbed of intrigue ; and it is by intrigue that the Brahman of high caste, who finds his abilities too little appreciated by the ruling power, always works. There is no greater adept in the world in the capacity to undermine, to insinuate that which he dare not openly charge ; in the disseminating of slanderous whispers ; in convincing those with whom he may converse that the false thing is the true thing."[1]

In a foot-note the writer adds : "In stating this I write from my own experience of the class." Then again :

"After the first moment of astonishment, the more astute amongst them, especially the Bengali Brahmans, recognized that whilst the new rules had abolished, for the time, autocratic powers of Mr. Hastings, it had widened the road to intrigue, and would afford them opportunities, such as they had never dreamt of, for the practice of that chicanery in which they excel all other races. The first field on which the ablest and most unprincipled amongst them determined, to practise his hereditary vocation ..... Foremost to recognize the brilliant opening thus offered to his genius was Nand Kumar."[2]

In face of such a consensus of opinion, do Bengalees advance their reputation, do they serve the interests of truth, when they put forward this infamous person, this genuine "Captain-General of iniquity" as one of the noblest specimens of their race, as their champion, leader and representative, their ideal of a hero ? No, such a view is essentially

[1] Life of Warren Hastings, page 198.

[2] Life of Warren Hastings, pp. 201, 202.

unfair to Bengalees and to Brahmins. Nuncomar was not only not the noblest of Bengalees, but not even a typical or average Bengalee. Macaulay suggests that he was one of the worst specimens of a Bengalee and indeed as much inferior to the average Bengalee as the Italian is to the Englishman; and in that view he is absolutely right. No Bengalee has equalled him in villainy. The foot-note quoted from Colonel Malleson's work shows that that writer did not know his own mind. Colonel Malleson's experience of Brahmins,—it would be interesting to know the sphere of life in which it was acquired,—could never have made him indulge in his generalisations about Brahmin character if he had not before him the story of Nuncomar. But that story does not represent the normal state of things in the country: it is wholly without a parallel even in degraded Bengal. About Brahmins in general something may have to be said later on.

Nuncomar Roy was a son of Padlab Roy (which name appears to be an English corruption of the name Padmanabha Roy), who was Amin of two or three Pergunnahs and who appointed Nuncomar as a kind of Naib under him. Afterwards, in the reign of the Nabob Ali Verdi Khan, called also Mehabut Jung, Nuncomar was appointed Amin of the Pergunnahs Hidgeley and Mushadal, where he committed oppression on zemindars and ryots and was guilty of much malversation in his office. The victims of his oppression laid their complaints before the Roy Royan Cheyn Roy, who immediately displaced Nuncomar, and after his accounts were properly stated, confined him in chains for the payment of his balance and summoned him daily to the Khalsa Cutcherry, where he was constantly flogged and beaten. At last his father paid up for him the balance due to Government. Nuncomar was released, but his father never afterwards saw his face or forgave him. "As soon as the seeds of internal enmity sprang up between the Nabob Mehabut Jung and his General Mustapha Khan, and Nuncomar began to suspect it (as it is

his nature to apply himself diligently to a party, when any disturbance arises between great men), he immediately waited upon Mustapha Khan." Mustapha Khan took into his hands the Malguzarry of several Zemindars, for some of whose lands Nuncomar became security. When a heavy balance was incurred on those lands, and Nuncomar's practices came to be better understood, Mustapha Khan determined to seize him and send him prisoner to the Roy Royan. He got intelligence of this and escaped secretly to Calcutta. When the quarrel between the Nabob and his General openly broke out, and Mustapha was slain, and the Roy Royan Cheyn Roy was also dead, Nuncomar made his appearance again at Moorshedabad, and by the recommendation of the Mutsaddis obtained the collection of the Pergunnah of Sutseetra.

These facts are obtained from a letter of Mr. Barwell's to his sister, discovered and published for the first time by Sir James Stephen in his work on the Trial of Nuncomar. The letter is a condensed biography of Nuncomar. All its details it is neither necessary nor desirable to reproduce. Much of it is borne out by other evidence. Only the more important points of the narrative can be here noticed. Nuncomar was soon recalled from his post and he lived for some time the life of an unscrupulous adventurer. He came to Hooghly ; was confined closely for five days by Meer Hootubullu, an inhabitant of the place, for his debt of Rs. 2,000 ; then he absconded to Moorshedabad. He was on one occasion severely bastinadoed with a bamboo by Nabob Siraj-ud-Dowlah, apparently for some impertinent remark. The Nabob sent him also to Hidayet Ali Khan at Hoogly, whose treatment of Nuncomar compelled him to go again to Murshidabad, where he was reduced to the utmost poverty. After many vicissitudes, through the patronage of one Munshi Saduk Ulla, he was appointed Dewan of Hooghly, under Mahomed Yar Beg Khan, Foujdar of Hooghly. This Foujdar was dismissed from his post during the life-time of Ali Verdi Khan, and on

the death of that Nabob, Siraj-ud-Dowlah appointed successively two Mahomedans to the office. Ultimately Nuncomar managed to have himself appointed Foujdar by securing the dismissal of the second Mahomedan incumbent.

When Colonel Clive was besieging Chandernagore, Dewan Nuncomar Roy sent him complimentary messages by one Kissen Ram Bow, and soon "the Colonel conceived a prodigious friendship for the Dewan," which came to be generally known. When Colonel Clive was to go to Patna, Maharaja Doolub Ram appointed Nuncomar as his Vakeel to accompany the Colonel, expecting thus to improve his own relations with the Colonel. "Nuncomar had so ingratiated himself into favour that it was usual for the people to style him the black Colonel." Through the influence of Clive he was appointed Dewan to Mahomed Ameer Beg Khan who was made Foujdar of Hooghly, Hidgeley, &c. Mir Jaffir unable to pay directly to the English the sums he had agreed to pay after the battle of Plassey, had given them assignments on the revenues of the districts of Burdwan, Nadiya and Hooghly. Nuncomar was on the recommendation of Clive appointed in 1758 their agent for the collection.

No long time has to pass before Nuncomar's cloven foot is out again. He contrived to bring about an enmity between Maharaja Doolub Ram and Nabob Mir Jaffir, which almost came to open war. The Maharaja had remonstrated with Nuncomar for the rapacity he had exhibited as Collector. By his intrigues he succeeded not only in securing the removal of the Maharaja, but in causing a wide breach between him and the Nabob. At this time Nuncomar also demanded from his old friend, patron and master, Mahomed Yar Beg Khan, the sum of Rs. 14,000 under pretence of expenses formerly incurred, and by threatening him with an examination of all his accounts. "Mahomed Yar Beg, looking upon Nuncomar's principles like to those of the adder which will inevitably sting the bosom that cherishes it, paid his unjust

demand." To his present master, Ameer Beg Khan, he gave such pernicious advice that he raised a suspicion of him in the mind of the Nabob Mir Jaffir, so that Ameer, finding his situation desperate, begged leave to resign his post, and got on board a vessel.

Discovery of a certain unfairness on the part of Nuncomar in a particular matter created a breach between him and Maharaja Dooliah Ram, but Nuncomar had played his cards very well and he could dispense with all other friends and patrons when he secured the confidence and patronage of Mir Jaffir and a monopoly of influence over him. He could not long retain Clive's confidence, and when Clive was leaving the country, Vansittart, warned by him, kept up the appearance of friendship and countenance to Nuncomar, but intrusted him with no part of his confidence. Nuncomar would not be himself if he did not plan a revenge. "He studied every possible method to raise a war and to endanger the Company, to which purpose a letter of his was detected after the victory of Burdwan and the death of Indar Jat Perkhee." Mr. Vansittart put a guard of Sepoys upon him and produced before the Council many treasonable letters and copies taken from Nuncomar's house. Dissensions in Council, brought about by Nuncomar himself, led to his release after forty days. The scurrility of two letters that he wrote to Colonel Clive and the Company shortly after his release led Mr. Vansittart to confine him to his house for a number of days. The discovery of certain letters fabricated by Nuncomar, of which more will be presently said, led to his being imprisoned a second time under a Sepoy guard. He was released after a year, on the application of Mir Jaffir. He attended Mir Jaffir in the war against Meer Cossim. When the victory was decisively obtained over Meer Cossim, Nuncomar, unknown to Mir Jaffir, solicited and obtained from the Emperor Shah Alum the title of Maharaja, which was afterwards confirmed by Mir Jaffir.

The next incident in Nuncomar's life had better be stated altogether in Mr. Barwell's own words: "After this when Meer Mahomed Cossim Khan fled, and the Nabob Shuja-ud-Dowla had levied an army, Maharajah Nuncomar wrote a letter to Bulwant Singh, upon discovery of which treasonable correspondence, General Carnac was determined to seize Nuncomar, and send him under a guard to Calcutta. But at last by the earnest endeavour of Maharajah Nobkissen, who at that time was Banian to Major Adams, he escaped. A full account of this is to be found in the Records of the Council, where every particular of the whole affair may be learnt."

Nuncomar continued to be a source of disturbances, and, after Najim-ud-Dowla had succeeded Mir Jaffir, had to be sent under a guard to Calcutta. Lord Clive on his return from Europe to Calcutta "appointed Muzzaffer Jung the principal minister, and appointed Maharaja Dooliah Ram and Juggut Seat to assist him in the Government, and had determined in his own mind, for the tranquillity of the kingdom, to banish Nuncomar into Chittagong, and all Nuncomar's family were then in the utmost tribulation upon that account." This time also Nuncomar was saved by Nubkissen. "Maharaja Nobkishen represented that as Maharaja Nuncomar was a Brahmin, it was not right to punish him too severely, therefore his sentence of banishment to Chittagong was left unexecuted."

Gratitude was foreign to the nature of Nuncomar, and he was never by any chance betrayed into that weakness. His nature fully manifested itself in his relations with Nubkissen. In remembrance, it would seem, of kindly services recently rendered, he got up a false but serious complaint against Nubkissen. He "suborned a woman, by name Neeboo, for a present of 2,000 rupees, to accuse Maharaja Nobkishen of having forcibly committed a rape upon her." This complaint was fully inquired into, and the result has been given in a

wholesome flogging which he might never forget, is it difficult to guess the motive of the plea? It is not the infliction of flogging but the avoidance of jail, and the spirit that prompts the suggestion is one of tenderness and not of severity. It is easy to read the same spirit in Nubkissen's suggestion in the present case. The "surveillance" is a mere excuse to recommend the suggestion to the official mind; the real motive is the desire to spare an exalted Brahmin the indignity of deportation. If the recommendation as put in the official proceedings is to be understood literally, it has the fatal fault of proving too much. Deportation is a punishment held to be specially suitable to turbulent and disaffected persons, and if Nuncomar was not to be sent away to Chittagong because he was an "intriguing man," that would be a good argument for retaining in Calcutta "under surveillance" all dangerous characters at all times. Was surveillance or imprisonment impossible at Chittagong?

The precise nature of Nuncomar's duties as Collector will appear from the following extract from a letter of the Council to the Court of Directors, dated the 31st December 1758[1]:

"As we were of opinion, it was too troublesome a task for a European to collect in the payments amount the tuncaws given us by the Nawab, and being willing likewise to get the moneys in the account brought by the Rajahs immediately to Hugley without being sent to Muxabad, we appointed Nundkumar on the 19th August Tasildar on behalf of the Company, he being recommended by the Select Committee as a person greatly attached to the English, and very capable of the employ we had appointed him to. His business is to call upon the Rajahs for the payments conformable to the Kistybunds they have signed to, and when any considerable sum is received from them, to pay it into the Treasury; and in order to give him greater weight and influence with the Rajahs and Zemindars, we have procured a Perwanna from the Nawab empowering him to settle with the Rajahs, &c., for the amount of their tuncaws to the Company. We hope this method will have a good effect, and be a means of collecting in the money from those people without trouble and disputes."

[1] Long's *Selections from Unpublished Records*, Art. 375.

All this confidence and reputation were lost in no time. Nabob Kassim Ali Khan in the course of a letter[1], dated the 24th February 1761, writes:

"I have before wrote your Excellency concerning the contents of the letters I had intercepted of Nunkumar's, that he had carried on a correspondence with our enemies; that I had made him prisoner and was examining his papers. On an examination thereof, I find that he corresponded with the Shahzadah's people, Coingar Khan and Sree Bhut; Nunkumar has also endeavoured to detriment the affairs of your Sirkar and the Company's. He is therefore undoubtedly culpable, and had it been of such a nature as to come under the tenor of our laws, he would not have escaped unpunished."

Official evidence of Nuncomar's oppressions at Hooghly and his malversation as Tasildar is to be found in a letter[2] from the Governor to the Nabob, dated October 29th, 1763. Nuncomar contrived to increase his influence very largely, but though he managed all the affairs of the Khalsa nothing was properly settled even up to the end of 1763, and the collections were poor. This appears from a letter of Raja Doolub Ram's, received on the 10th January 1764.[3]

That letter also sets forth a list of the offices which were formerly annexed to the Nizamut and which were now separated from it and held by Nuncomar. These were (1) Huzzoor Novesy (office for taking copies of Sunnuds, &c.), Darogaship of the private Treasury and Jagheers Mustofygurry (office for examining the accounts of dismissed Officers); (2) Accounts of the Province of Patna; (3) Accounts of Poornea; (4) Accounts of the Chuckla of Bhagulpore; (5) Mushrefee of the Dewankhana; (6) Munshi-Khana; (7) Accounts of the Jagheers.

Three months later, the Governor in a letter[4] to the Nabob, dated the 17th April 1764, bitterly complains of the

[1] Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 553.
[2] Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 708.
[3] Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 710.
[4] Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 786.

maladministration of the provinces and attributes it to the "influence and direction" of Nuncomar. He goes on:

"These are strong instances of his misconduct and negligence, but what gives us still greater reason to be dissatisfied with him is, that from advices lately received from Major Carnac, we have too much reason to suspect he has been carrying on a secret correspondence with the enemy and counteracting every measure we have been taking for the support of your Government."

The Court of Directors expressed its opinion of Nuncomar in the following terms in a letter[1] dated the 22nd February 1764:

"From the whole of your proceedings with respect to Nundcomar, there seems to be no doubt of his endeavouring by forgery and false accusations to ruin Ram Churn; that he has been guilty of carrying on correspondence with the Country Powers hurtful to the Company's interests, and instrumental in conveying letters between the Shahzada and the French Governor-General of Pondicherry; in short, it appears he is of that wicked and turbulent disposition that no harmony can subsist in a society where he has the opportunity of interfering, we therefore most readily concur with you that Nundcomar is a person improper to be trusted with his liberty in our settlements, and capable of doing mischief if he is permitted to go out of the province either to the northward or towards the Deccan, and we shall therefore depend upon your keeping such a watch over all his actions as may be the means of preventing his disturbing the quiet of the public or injuring individuals for the future."

Great light is thrown on one chapter of Nuncomar's history by Mr. Wheeler in his Memorandum of the Records in the Foreign Department. He gives the following analysis of the Proceedings, secret and separate, from the 27th April 1761 to the 27th September 1762.

"The volume of Proceedings on the early forgeries of Nuncomar is a curious record connected with the administration of Mr. Vansittart, and is important on two grounds: first, as illustrative of the secret intriguing, real or imagined, which was carried on between the Hindoo chiefs in the service of the Nawab and the military commanders in the army of Shah Alum; and secondly, as indicating the origin of the

[1] Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 133.

long-nourished hatred of Nundcomar against Warren Hastings, which did not find full expression until many years afterwards. It has already been pointed out that the policy by which the Nawab Aliverdy Khan had been enabled to retain his Nawabship free from rebellion was that of reserving all important posts for Hindoos alone, to the exclusion of the Mussulmans. His successor, Surajadowla, did not exactly reverse this policy, but he offended and insulted both parties, and was, consequently, ousted by a union of both parties. Meer Jaffir, and his successor, Meer Cossim, both attempted to recruit their respective treasuries at the expense of the wealthiest individuals amongst the Hindoos. It was under such circumstances, and whilst the English and Meer Cossim were still at war with the 'King' Shah Alum, that some extraordinary letters were discovered on the person of a hurkara, which seemed to imply that Raja Doolub Ram and another of the Setts, named Ram Churn, were carrying on a treasonous correspondence with one of the military commanders in the camp of Shah Alum. . . . . From the proceedings of Government in this matter it may be gathered that for a long time Mr. Vansittart and his Council were divided upon the subject until about a year afterwards, when Mr. Warren Hastings was appointed Member of Council. Strangely enough, as it now appears, one of Mr. Hastings' first acts after his arrival in Calcutta was to investigate the case; and his enquiries led to the discovery that the Native correspondence was a forgery in which the notorious Nundcomar was deeply implicated. The object of Nundcomar in forging these letters was apparently to ruin those influential personages in the eyes of the English, probably to get rid of parties who appeared to him to be standing in the way of his advancement, and possibly to afford an excuse to Meer Cossim for plundering their private property. How this unprincipled intriguer sought to revenge himself many years afterwards by bringing charges of corruption against Warren Hastings, and how in the end he was himself convicted and executed for a repetition of the same crime of forgery, are matters of general history. It is evident from these and other notices of Nundcomar that he was a thorough villain. In the Secret Proceedings for 1767 (see paragraph 14) a charge is recorded against him of endeavouring to ruin a rival named Nobkissen by inducing a married Brahmin woman to bring a false accusation against Nobkissen of having violated her."

No one will suspect Clive of any malice towards Nuncomar. He was at one time Clive's favourite and *protégé*. It

was on Clive's recommendation, as has already been stated, that he was appointed Collector of three districts. But Nuncomar had only to be known to be hated. In 1765 Clive had seen enough of him to make him change his opinion completely. When General Carnac asked for Nuncomar the post of Naib Subah, Clive answered that "although Nandkumar may not prove guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, yet, believe me, my dear General, he will do no honour either to the Nawab or to the Company in any great or eminent post, which he was never fitted or designed for; and I can give you unanswerable reasons against his being the principal person about the Nawab when I have the pleasure of seeing you." On the death of Mir Jaffir, Mahomed Reza Khan had been appointed Naib Subah by the Calcutta Council. Clive on his arrival in Calcutta felt himself called upon either to confirm that appointment or to appoint somebody else. He had grave objections to Nuncomar, but he had little confidence in Reza Khan also. To General Carnac he wrote that the fact of his being "a Mussulman, acute, and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power, and yet the young man [the Nawab Nazim] must have about him men capable of directing and governing him ; for, besides his youth, he is really very simple, and always receives his impressions from those last about him. It is really shocking to see what a set of miserable and mean wretches Nandkumar has placed about him, men that the other day were horse-keepers." Having to make a choice of evils Clive confirmed Reza Khan in his appointment as Naib Subah, but associated with him Maharaja Doolub Ram and the wealthy banker, Jagat Sett.

When in 1772 Warren Hastings was appointed by the Court of Directors to preside in their Council at Bengal he found that Mahomed Reza Khan as Naib Subah was the head of the native administration of Bengal, and Shitab Roy, also

as Naib Subah, was the head of the native administration of Behar. The former was ordinarily resident at Murshidabad, the latter at Patna. Nuncomar had in the meantime made complaints to the Court of Directors against the administration of Reza Khan. The first task imposed upon Warren Hastings when he took his seat as President of the Council on the 28th April 1772, was to inform the Board that in consequence of orders received from the Secret Committee "he has sent instructions to Mr. Middleton to arrest the persons of Mahomed Reza Cawn and Raja Amrit Sing, his Dewans, and to send them under a guard to Calcutta; that he has received advice from Mr. Middleton, that the same has accordingly been put in execution." The Court of Directors had written to Hastings that if the assistance and information of Nuncomar should be serviceable to him in investigating the conduct of Reza Khan, he should yield him such encouragements and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services might deserve. Hastings had no difficulty in giving effect to these directions as he was himself convinced that Nuncomar could give valuable assistance in investigating the conduct of Reza Khan. On the deposition of that official he proposed that Munny Begum, the widow of Mir Jaffir, should be made Superintendent of the Nawab's household and guardian of his person, and that Raja Gooroo Dass, the son of Nuncomar, should assist her as Dewan. In a letter to the Court of Directors he wrote:—

"There is no doubt that Nuncomar is capable of affording me great services by his information and advice; but it is on his abilities, and on the activity of his ambition and hatred to Mahomed Reza Cawn that I depend for investigating the conduct of the latter and, by eradicating his influence, for confirming the authority which you have assumed in the administration of the affairs of this country. The reward which has been assigned him will put it fully in his power to answer those expectations, and will be an encouragement to him to exert all his abilities for the accomplishment of them. Had I not been guarded by the caution which you have been pleased to enjoin on me, yet my own knowledge of the character of Nuncomar would

have restrained me from yielding him any trust or anything which could prove detrimental to the Company's interests."

In making the arrangement Hastings was guided, it will be seen, not by generosity, but by prudence. He had known Nuncomar too long and too well to have any confidence in him. What Clive had discovered late he had discovered early. As he wrote to the Directors :

"From the year 1759 to the time when I left Bengal in 1764 I was engaged in a continued opposition to the interests and designs of that man, because I judged him to be adverse to the welfare of my employers; and in the course of this contention I received sufficient indications of his ill-will to have made me an irreconcilable enemy if I could suffer my passions to supersede the duty which I owe to the Company."

The evidence is only too clear that Hastings did not allow his passions to supersede his duty or even to over-ride his judgment or his sense of justice. In a well-known minute he recorded an opinion of Nuncomar than which nothing could be fairer. Without taking it upon himself to vindicate the moral character of Nuncomar, he "thinks it but justice to make a distinction between the violation of a *trust* and an offence committed against our Government by a man who owed it no allegiance, nor was indebted to it for protection, but on the contrary was the actual servant and minister of a master whose interest naturally suggested that kind of policy which sought by foreign aids and the diminution of the powers of the Company to raise his own consequence and to re-establish his authority."

The Court of Directors appreciated Hastings' wisdom and self-restraint, and wrote to him :

"Your choice of the Begum for guardian to the Nawab we entirely approve : the use you intend making of Nundcoomar is very proper, and it affords us great satisfaction to find that you could at once determine to suppress all personal resentment when the public welfare seemed to clash with your private sentiments relative to Nundcoomar."

Nuncomar must have done his best to secure evidence against the administrator whose place he wanted to fill, but

after a protracted trial both Mahomed Reza Khan and Raja Shitab Roy were acquitted of the charges brought against them. Great was Nuncomar's disappointment when the offices of those grandees were abolished. The effect of this stroke of Hastings' policy on Nuncomar's mind cannot be better described than in the words of Macaulay :—

"Nundcoomar had proposed to destroy the Mussalman administration, and to rise on its ruin. Both his malevolence and his cupidity had been disappointed. Hastings had made him a tool, had used him for the purpose of accomplishing the transfer of the Government from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, from native to European hands. The rival, the enemy, so long envied, so implacably persecuted, had been dismissed unhurt. The situation so long and ardently desired had been abolished. It was natural that the Governor should be from that time an object of the most intense hatred to the vindictive Brahmin. As yet, however, it was necessary to suppress such feelings. The time was coming when that long animosity was to end in a desperate and deadly struggle."

That Nuncomar's sole end was personal aggrandisement, that he wanted to rise on the ruin of the Mahomedan administration, is evidenced also by the proceedings, already quoted, of the Select Committee of the 19th July 1765. Hastings had now given a crushing blow to his long cherished ambition, but, as events showed, he had only scotched the snake.

CHAPTER VII.

NUNCOMAR : HIS TRIAL.

The appointment to which Nuncomar aspired, and of which he was baulked, was one which Nubkissen could have had for the asking. The document[1] which follows, throws light on the circumstances which led to the appointment of Mahomed Reza Khan.

AT A SELECT COMMITTEE HELD THE 19*th September* 1765.
AT FORT WILLIAM.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CLIVE, *President.*
JOHN CARNAC, ESQ.
HARRY VERESLST, ESQ.

It appears that though Mahomed Reza Khan is a very pliable gentleman, yet we do not very much approve his appointment to the post of Naeb Nazim of Bengal. This gentleman has a very large amount of passive goodness. But we want that the Naeb Nazim should be a very active man, who would most willingly lend us valuable assistance in the improvement of our most lawful trade.

There is no other man so well fitted for the post as Babu Ram Hari Chatterjee, at present Dewan of our Kasim Bazar Factory. But some wicked people, at the instigation of Maharajah Nun Coomar, have sent us a petition objecting to Ram Hari's appointment to this most responsible post. The ground of their objection is that Ram Hari is not a descendant of an aristocratic family, and that his father was in the service of Moonshee Nabakissen as a cook at a monthly pay of one rupee eight annas.

We would have tried our best not to believe this false story. But unfortunately Nabakissen himself told me that Ram Hari's father was his cook on a salary of one Rupee only. Nabakissen is certainly to blame for unconsciously corroborating a false story, concocted by men belonging to Nun Coomar's party.

We are therefore compelled to approve and confirm the appointment of Mahomed Reza Khan.

An appointment to which a son of Nubkissen's cook was held eligible was one which Nubkissen might not only have

[1] Quoted in the Bengali book on Maharajah Nanda Coomar by Chandi Charan Sen, page 226.

obtained if he had cared for it, but which he had practically at his disposal. Any nominee of his could have obtained it. He had no ambition, however, to fill appointments of that kind. Mere emoluments were no attraction to him. His interests were political, and mere civil offices, however high, were not to his taste, at any rate after he had proved his political capacity and made his mark in political life. Nuncomar's ambition was wholly different. He was ever thirsting for high civil employment, for mere self-aggrandizement and not service of the state was his end. Great indeed were his indignation and disappointment when the office of Naib Subah was abolished. He planned vengeance against Warren Hastings, and a favourable opportunity arose when by the arrival of the members of the newly appointed Council, the power and importance of Hastings were reduced. The Council came "armed with the most uncompromising spirit of hostility towards the Government of the Company, and towards Hastings in particular." Almost immediately after their arrival they "wrested the government out of the hands of Hastings." Nuncomar took advantage of the situation. His attempt to humiliate and if possible crush Hastings has been to Macaulay a text for a sweeping condemnation not merely of Bengalee, but of Indian and even Asiatic character. His judgment is worth noting :—

"The natives soon found this out [that is, that the higher powers of government and its most valuable patronage had been taken from Warren Hastings]. They considered him as a fallen man, and they acted after their kind. Some of our readers may have seen in India, a cloud of crows pecking a sick vulture to death, no bad type of what happens in that country as often as fortune deserts one who has been great and dreaded. In an instant all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favour of his victorious enemies by accusing him. An Indian Government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined, and in twenty-four hours it will be furnished with

grave charges, supported by depositions so full and circumstantial, that any person unaccustomed to Asiatic mendacity would regard it as decisive.....Hastings was now regarded as helpless. The power to make or mar the fortune of every man in Bengal had passed, as it seemed, into the hands of the new Councillors. Immediately charges against the Governor-General began to pour in."

This is neither just as opinion nor correct as history. It is a generalisation from a single instance and is at best a gross exaggeration of a defect in some types of Indian character. In the next place it does not appear that any charges poured in against the Governor-General. Indeed no one, certainly no Bengalee except Nuncomar, appears to have brought any charge against Hastings. It is Nuncomar alone that Bengalees must thank for such certificates as Macaulay has thought fit to give them about their national character, and the only way in which they can vindicate themselves and uphold their honour is by disowning the infamous Nuncomar, that is by disclaiming all sympathy with him. No Bengalee approached him in cunning or criminality, and none was so ready to be a crow pecking a sick vulture to death.

The accusation which Nuncomar brought against Hastings was formulated in a letter addressed to the Governor and Council and laid before the Board on the 11th March, 1775, by Francis, into whose hands it had been delivered. It was partly in the nature of an insinuation and partly direct. Nuncomar related his connection with the Company and recounted what he considered to be his services, one of which was that he assisted Hastings in prosecuting Mahomed Reza Khan and Shitab Roy. Then the accusation begins. Mahomed Reza Khan offered 10 lakhs to Hastings and 2 lakhs to Nuncomar, and Shitab Roy offered 4 lakhs to Hastings and one lakh to Nuncomar. These offers Nuncomar, in all honesty and with a noble disinterestedness, reported to Hastings, who not wishing that there should be a witness to his corruption, refused them. But soon after Hastings set Mahomed Reza

Khan at liberty and entirely dropt the enquiry into his embezzlements and malpractices. "Why this extraordinary favour was so suddenly shown, the Governor can best assign the reasons." Shitab Roy was reinstated in office. "Motives of these proceedings will best be understood from Mr. Hastings himself." The ingenuous Nuncomar could not imagine why his prosecution should break down unless the person conducting the inquiry had received an illegal gratification. He was apparently not prepared to say that he had offered convincing evidence against the men he had prosecuted, but he made the quiet assumption or suggestion that bribery alone could account for the result. The direct charge comes next. At various times in the year 1772 Hastings had received the sum of three lakhs and fifty-four thousand rupees from Nuncomar and Munny Begum for procuring Raja Gooroo Dass's appointment to the Niabut and causing Munny Begum to be made the superior of the family.

The letter containing the accusation had been received by Francis in his home in the course of a visit of Nuncomar's. He professed to have not read it before he laid it before the Board. At a meeting of the Board on the 13th March 1775 another letter from Nuncomar was received and read, in which he offered to appear before the Board to give his evidence, oral and documentary. Hastings's enemies in Council, Francis, Monson and Clavering, seemed to revel in the opportunity thus offered of humiliating Hastings. They desired to summon Nuncomar before the Council to give evidence. Hastings recorded a Minute in which he protested against the procedure as being unconstitutional and inconsistent with his position. It is not necessary here to refer in detail to the various passages at arms between Hastings and his opponents in Council, and it is enough only to state the conclusion. Hastings declared the Council dissolved and protested against acts of the Council during his absence as illegal and unwarranted. He then quitted the Council. Barwell also withdrew from the

Board. General Clavering took the chair, Nuncomar was called in and asked to offer his evidence. A careful analysis of the evidence is given by Sir James Stephen in his work "Nuncomar and Impey." That writer, acknowledged to have been one of the greatest authorities on Criminal Law and the Law of Evidence, has expressed the opinion that the evidence was grossly inadequate to support the charges. The Board, however, came to the conclusion "that the several sums of money specified in Maharaja Nuncomar's letter of the 8th March have been received by the Governor-General, and that the said sums of money do of right belong to the East India Company." It was resolved "that the Governor-General be requested to pay into the Company's treasury the amount of those sums for the Company's use." In accordance with the orders of the Board the papers and proceedings were delivered to the Company's Attorney so that he might obtain counsel's opinion as to the means of recovering the sums of money which Hastings had been declared liable to pay into the Company's treasury. The law officers of the Company in Bengal did not advise any prosecution in India, but they advised the Board to send the records to the Company who might take such legal steps as they might be advised. The subsequent history of the proceedings cannot be better described than in the words of Lord Thurlow: "These documents arrived at a time when it certainly was the anxious wish of the Minister to take any fair and reasonable ground he could for the removal of Mr. Hastings. The papers were all submitted to the law officers of the Company, who declared that the information of Nundcoomar, even upon the *exparte* case before them, could not possibly be true. The reasons for that belief were assigned at length. The Directors, though a majority of them were very well disposed to oblige the Minister, concurred with their law officers, and all that rubbish and trash remained unnoticed from 1776 to the year 1789, when, as your Lordships know, it was repeatedly

mentioned to you by the managers as containing proofs of the corruption of Mr. Hastings, and it was very properly rejected by the Court. It was never pretended by the managers that they had evidence to go a step beyond this rejected information of Nundcoomar."

Nuncomar next comes into notice as one of the accused in a charge of conspiracy against Hastings and Barwell. One Camal-ud-din made a complaint to Hastings to the effect that he had been forced by Nuncomar and Mr. Fowke to sign a petition stating that he had bribed Hastings and Barwell. He was referred to the Chief Justice, and the Judges, who exercised the functions of justices of the peace, held an inquiry. There was no *prima facie* case against Francis Fowke, who was discharged. Hastings, Barwell and Vansittart were asked if they intended to prosecute Joseph Fowke, Nuncomar and Radha Churn for conspiracy. They declared their intention to prosecute. At the session, Nuncomar and Fowke were convicted on the charge of conspiracy against Barwell alone. Fowke was fined fifty rupees. No sentence was passed on Nuncomar, because he was in jail awaiting the extreme penalty of the law for his memorable conviction on a charge of forgery.

If it is necessary to refer to the trial for forgery, it is because Nubkissen gave evidence in it. The popular notion with regard to that trial has, for a long time, been that it was a vindictive prosecution abetted, if not started, by Hastings, and that Impey, acting as his tool, convicted Nuncomar, or rather secured his conviction by the unfair admission and rejection of evidence and by misdirections to the jury. It is necessary to remember, however, that the prosecution arose out of a civil case which had been instituted in the Diwani Adalut or Civil Court of Calcutta about two years before Sir Elijah Impey and the other Judges of the Supreme Court arrived in Calcutta ; that when criminal proceedings were first instituted the complaint was enquired into by two Judges of the

Supreme Court (not including Impey) acting as justices of the peace before the case was committed to the sessions presided over by Sir Elijah Impey ; and the trial was held not only before him, but before him and the other Judges of the Supreme Court.

The facts of the case are briefly as follows. The civil suit just referred to had been instituted against Nuncomar by Gungabissen, the executor of Bollakey Doss, a banker. It had in fact been instituted earlier in the Judicial Cutcherry and was transferred to the Dewani Adalut on its establishment in 1772. A sum of over a lakh and a quarter was claimed as "due to the estate for Company's bonds." Nuncomar denied the claim, alleging that after adjustment of accounts, there was a small balance in his favour. The account set up had been signed by the plaintiff and his attorney, Mohun Pershad, but they denied that it was an account with Nuncomar. In the course of the defence, Nuncomar set up three bonds alleged to have been executed in his favour by Bollakey Dass, upon the strength of which Nuncomar claimed to retain the Company's bonds. The court recommended arbitration for several reasons. Nuncomar at first raised a difficulty, but afterwards consented. The parties, however, could not agree about arbitrators, and whilst matters were in this suspense, the Supreme Court of Judicature arrived in Bengal (October 19, 1774). The plaintiff, who believed the bonds to be fictitious, was advised by his client to institute a criminal prosecution for forgery against Nuncomar, now that a competent and independent Court was available. No proceedings could be instituted, however, before the plaintiff could get access to the original papers which were not obtained till after many applications had been made from time to time. On the 6th of May 1775 Nuncomar was brought before Le Maistre and Hyde and was committed to the common gaol to be tried on a charge of feloniously uttering a forged writing obligatory with intent to

defraud the executors of Bollakey Doss. Those Judges in a letter to the Court of Directors, August 2, 1775, say : "When the charge of the forgery was exhibited against the Maharaja Nuncomar, Mr. Justice Le Maistre happened to be the sitting magistrate. He requested the assistance of Mr. Justice Hyde, who attended with him the whole day upon the examination, which lasted from nine in the morning till near ten at night ; when, *no doubt of his guilt remaining in the heart of either of us*, upon the evidence on the part of the Crown, a commitment in the usual form was made out."

"The importance of these details," says Sir J. F. Stephen, "lies in the fact that they show that whatever connection Hastings and Impey, or either of them, may have had with the prosecution of Nuncomar, it originated in the usual way. There had been a litigation of long standing, in which an imputation of forgery had been cast upon Nuncomar. His antagonist decided to prosecute him criminally, and tried to do so many months before the Supreme Court was established, but was unable at that time to get the necessary materials. When the Supreme Court was established these efforts were renewed, and succeeded ; and as soon as the forged document was obtained, Nuncomar was brought before the magistrates and committed for trial in the ordinary course."

The purposes of this book do not require a more elaborate statement of the facts of the case. The most complete and the most searching and systematic account of the case and of all facts connected with it is to be found in Sir J. F. Stephen's work, to which it is impossible for any writer on this chapter of Indian History to avoid incurring a very large obligation. There is no occasion here to discuss the merits of the case or the impartiality of the tribunal. It is sufficient to consider the evidence given by Nubkissen,

RAJA BAHADUR RAJENDRO NARAIANA DEB.

The following is an extract from a published authentic report of the trial[1] :—

RAJAH NOBKISSEN.

Q.—Do you know whose seal this is? [Paper produced.]

A.—The name upon the seal is Maha Rajah Nundocomar. It appears to be his seal; I cannot tell who fixed it.

The paper of which the following is a translate read by Mr. Elliot.

NUNDCOMAR
BAHADUR,
MAHA RAJAH.

Formerly the jewels belonging to me were deposited with Seat Bollakee Doss. In the Bengal year, 1172, he gave me a bond as the value thereof, for the sum of rupees forty-eight thousand and twenty-one, and a premium. I having delivered over the said bond to Gungabissen, who is the nephew and manager of the business of the aforesaid Seat, he paid all together the sum of current rupees sixty-nine thousand six hundred and thirty, in bonds of the English Company, which is the amount of my demand, as principal, premium and batta.

Written on the fourth of Maugh, in the Bengal year 1176.

Court.—Is the affixing a seal, the manner in this country of authenticating papers?

A.—There are three sorts of customs in this country. *First*, for many matters, merchants among themselves sign and witness, but do not seal; that is, the Bengal and Calcutta merchants.

Second.—Among Mogul Mussulmen, who know no character but Persian, they write Alaubd, and set their seals.

Third.—Government affairs pass by seal, without sign manual of any kind.

Q. Is the application of a seal sufficient to such a paper as that? [Shewn receipt letter F.]

A. As one might know Nagree, and the other Persian and Bengali, such a seal might be sufficient. This paper being only a receipt, a seal is sufficient. The word Alaubd is not needful in this case.

Q. Is it necessary that such a writing as this be confirmed by witness?

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[1] *The Trial of Maha Rajah Nundocomar, Bahadur, For Forgery.* Published by Authority of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal. London, Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand. 1776. P. 27.

A. It is not necessary. [Translate of a bond exhibit A read.]

The prisoner desired he might ask Rajah Nobkissen a question.

Court.—Let him consult his Counsel before he ask the question. [The question being overheard by Nobkissen, he said, "Maha Raja Nundocomar had better not ask me that question." Upon which Nundocomar declined asking the question.]

Court to Jury.—You must receive no prejudice from this; you must forget the conversation, and judge only by the evidence at the bar.

[The Jury said they would only judge by the evidence.]

Q. How long did you know before his death?

A. I believe, three or four years, when Lord Clive was Governor.

Q. What was Bollakey Doss's business?

A. He was not then in any business in Calcutta.

Q. Was you intimate with him?

A. I was very well acquainted with him.

Q. What was his general character?

A. A very honest man.

Q. Did you know Pudmohun Doss?

A. I did.

Q. Do you know anything of Bollakey Doss's circumstances?

A. He was reckoned a monied man.

Q. Are you acquainted with Bollakey Doss's manner of executing bonds?

A.— I know nothing about it.

Again :[1] Rajah Nobkissen.

Q.—Did you know Sillabut?

A.—Yes; he was a Vakeel and Munshy of Bollakey Doss.

Q.—Are you acquainted with his handwriting?

A.—I am; I have seen him write many times.

[Bond shewn him.]

Q.—Is this the handwriting of Sillabut?

A.—The words "Sillabut, Vakeel of Bollakey Doss," are not of his handwriting; it is not his common writing: I have seen several papers of his handwriting.

Q.—Can you take upon you to swear it is not his handwriting?

A.—Sillabut wrote several letters to me and Lord Clive, and has wrote several things before me: this is not the kind of writing I have seen him write; but God knows whether it is his handwriting or not.

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[1] Idem. Pp. 30, 31.

Q.—What is your opinion about it?

A.—The prisoner is a Brahmin; I am a Coit; it may hurt my religion; it is not a trifling matter; the life of a Brahmin is at stake.

Q.—Do you, or do you not, think this the handwriting of Sillabut? Remember, you are upon your oath, to tell the truth, and the whole truth.

A.—I cannot tell what is upon my mind on this occasion about it.

Q.—Why not?

A.—This concerns the life of a Brahmin. I don't chose to say what is in my mind about it.

Q.—Did Sillabut write a better, or worse, hand than this?

A.—The letters on this paper are well formed: those of Sillabut are not badly formed, but are not so good as these.

The papers are shewn him which were shewn to the former witness, for the purpose of selecting those which were the handwriting of Sillabut: he immediately fixes on the three papers before proved to be the handwriting of Sillabut.

Witness.—These three are the handwriting of Sillabut; I can find no other papers of his writing among these.

Q.—Did you ever see these papers before?

A.—Never in my life: I never was in such a cause: I would rather lose a great sum of money than be in such a cause.

That is all the evidence that Nubkissen gave in the case, and it might have been left to speak for itself if it had not been very much misunderstood and misrepresented. Sir Elijah Impey in his charge to the jury refers to it in the following terms:—

"Rajah Nobkissen, on the paper being shewn him, swore positively, that it was not the handwriting of Sillabut; but afterwards retracted the positiveness of his opinion: but the circumstance of his immediate fixing on the three papers, which were before proved to be of Sillabut's writing, is a stronger proof of the knowledge of his handwriting, than any positive oath. I must again caution you against receiving any impression unfavourable to the prisoner, from the hesitation and doubts or exclamations of this witness, or from any other circumstances except what he actually deposed to."

This is an acknowledgment that, in spite of his hesitation, doubts and exclamations, the evidence given by Nubkissen was absolutely true, judged by a very practical test. There

was no attempt at cross-examining him. Sir James Stephen's comment on his evidence is:—"Both the reluctance and the obvious conviction with which he spoke are very remarkable."[1] In another passage that writer has occasion to refer to Nubkissen's "reluctance to give evidence on Nuncomar's trial."[2]

The reluctance is capable of being understood in two ways, either as an artful means of expressing the very thing which it appeared to suppress, or as a genuine unwillingness to say a thing which would endanger a Brahmin's life. Rules of charity and common sense alike tell us to presume an honorable purpose in preference to a perverse one where both are equally possible. Apart from all principles of presumption, however, there are certain facts to be borne in mind in connection with Nubkissen's evidence. The truth of it is indisputable. His hesitation cannot therefore be regarded as the prevarication of a perverse witness who conceals his ignorance of a fact by answers that simulate knowledge, who in spite of his ignorance is bent on ruining a prisoner by mere suggestions of guilt, but who dares not make positive affirmations for fear of exposing his mendacity. Nubkissen showed that he really did know Sillabut's handwriting, and was satisfied in his own mind that the signature shown to him on the bond was not in Sillabut's handwriting. No cross-examination could have discredited his evidence. If he still hesitated, it is clear that it was a *bonâ-fide* hesitation. It can never be pretended that he knew nothing of the matter on which he was called upon to give evidence, or that he knew the reverse of what he chose to say, and that out of spite against the prisoner or to help the prosecution, he, by his hesitation, merely put on a knowing aspect. What he did know was against the prisoner, and there was nothing to prevent his saying it outright, saying it with

[1] *Nuncomar and Impey*. Vol I, p. 120.
[2] *Idem*. Vol. II, p. 287. Foot-note.

eagerness, and saying it with emphasis, exaggeration and ornament, if his purpose was to help the prosecution and damage the defence. The hesitation was displayed in a Court of Law and not in a drawing-room. Nubkissen was giving evidence and not coquetting with a friend. Why then was he so modest, so sweetly reluctant, so importunate not to be pressed? Obviously he was indulging in no affectation, but was sincerely unwilling to bear evidence against a Brahmin whom he always regarded with kindly feelings and whose life was now at stake.

The trial commenced on the 8th of June and lasted for seven consecutive days. The jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty.

A motion in arrest of judgment was made by the prisoner's counsel, Mr. Farrer, and rejected. The Court pronounced the sentence of death. A petition for leave to appeal was rejected. A petition to the Judges, to which the signatures of the Jury were sought to be obtained, praying for a respite, had to be abandoned, because only one juryman consented to sign it. Nuncomar prepared a petition to be presented to the Governor-General in Council. Before submitting it he wrote a letter to Francis earnestly soliciting his intervention. In the course of the letter he wrote :—

"All my hopes under God Almighty is in you, therefore most humbly entreat, in the name of God, you will be pleased to intercede for me and procure a respite till His Most Gracious Majesty's pleasure is known..... As I entirely rely on Your Worship's endeavour to do me all the good you can, I shall not, according to the opinion of the Hindoos, accuse you in the day of judgment of neglecting to assist me in the extremity I am now in."

Sir James Stephen reprints the letter, dated the 31st July, 1775, from Merivale's *Life of Francis*. Francis acted as Macaulay's Bengalee would have done. As Sir J. Stephen remarks :—

"There is an ominous tone in the concluding words which must at least have given Francis an uneasy twinge in after life, when he

thought, if he ever did think, that earnestly and unsuccessfully as he had laboured for years to wreak his deadly malice on Hastings and Impey, he had left Nuncomar to die when he could have saved him with a word, and was as false and treacherous to his friend as he was persistent in his malignity against his enemies."

The prayer of Nuncomar's petition to the Governor-General was "to intercede with the Judges on your petitioner's behalf for a respite on such conditions as might be thought proper." Hastings suggested that the Council should endorse the petition to the Court. General Clavering and Colonel Monson opposed the idea, and the matter was dropped. This contemptuous rejection by the majority of the Council, of Nuncomar's petition to them, forms the subject of some strong but well-deserved remarks by Sir James Stephen :—"On the 1st of August 1775," writes he, "they had it in their power to save Nuncomar's life by simply voting in their capacity of a majority of the Council, to send to the judges, in the name of the Governor-General and Council, the letter which Farrer had drawn.....If at that time they really did believe that he was an innocent man, on the point of being judicially murdered, they made themselves, by their conduct, accomplices in the murder which they believed to be in the course of being committed."

Clavering, Monson and Francis were cruelly indifferent. The petition was not sent on to the Judges; no respite was granted; and on the 5th of August 1775 Nuncomar was hanged. The extreme severity of the sentence has made Nuncomar, and will probably continue to make him, an object of general sympathy. It is impossible not to agree with Macaulay. A sentence falling short of the capital would have commanded universal approval, for not only was there no doubt of Nuncomar's guilt in the case in which he was convicted, but no man could be in worse repute than he was as to his general character and behaviour. It would seem that in spite of this severity of the sentence, the conviction was

regarded with approval by various classes of people. In the course of July four addresses were presented to the Judges approving of their conduct. The first was addressed by the grand jury to Impey personally ; the second was also addressed to Impey personally by Europeans calling themselves " the free merchants, free mariners, and other inhabitants of the town of Calcutta ;" the third was signed by forty-three Armenians and addressed to all the Judges ; and the fourth was signed by about a hundred leading natives of Calcutta and the neighbourhood, headed by Maharaja Nubkissen. The last address states that the King of England has formed a new law ; that their " hearts were filled with various doubts concerning the manner in which the new law would operate, but by the manner in which it had been administered these doubts had been removed, and confidence and joy sprang up in our hearts, and we are thoroughly convinced that the country will prosper, the bad be punished and the good be cherished." It was not the influence of the Court which elicited this address of the native citizens, for it was over-shadowed by the influence of the Council. The address rather gave strength to a Court lacking influence. With reference to it Impey wrote :—

"The address from the Hindoos I thought no ingenuity could divert from proving the sense of the natives in this town, but it seems it is signed by black banyans. Every gentleman who has been in Calcutta will inform your lordship that there is scarcely one Hindoo in the settlement except the banyans of General Clavering, Colonel Monson and Mr. Francis, and one named Cossinant, who has not subscribed to that paper. Cossinant was one of the first that proposed the address ; he had afterwards a dispute with the Governor-General and Council about some allowance on account of a farm as will appear on the records of the Council, and declined signing the address."

It would thus appear that public opinion, European as well as native, was expressed in an unmistakable way in the nature of a vote of confidence in the Court. It is very likely that the masses of the Hindoo population were especially shocked by the hanging of a conspicuous Brahmin, but

it seems to be clear that all citizens, in whom the sense of legal justice prevailed over other sentiments and who had intelligently followed the course of the trial, loyally accepted a result which, if lamentable, the law rendered inevitable.

Thus closed a career to which the scaffold has been a real elevation. If Nuncomar is an object of sympathy to any class of men, it is because he was hanged. And scarcely has a criminal been more fortunate. He brought charges against Mahomed Reza Khan, and though that officer had to be acquitted because the charges were proved to be false, suspicious men looked upon the result as proof positive of the corruption of Hastings. He brought charges of corruption against Hastings, but though the evidence in support of them was of the feeblest, and competent judges to-day look upon them as wholly unfounded, Hastings has been presumed to have, with a natural malice, instigated and secretly managed the prosecution of his antagonist and accuser. The Chief Justice of the Court which tried him has been roundly charged with unfairness on mere suspicion for no other reason than that he was a friend of Hastings. Nuncomar with indiscriminate spite threw mud at many, and something of it has stuck to each. For himself he posed as an injured innocent, and the mere emphasis and persistency of his protestations have in the eyes of a good many invested his stories with an air of truthfulness. When, however, he is judged as he was, and not as he or his sentimental champions have made him out to be, he cannot but come to be recognised as a monumental villain, compared to whom Cethegus was a simple citizen and Titus Oates a man of honour.

CHAPTER VIII.

Last Days of Public Life—Sezawulship.

Nubkissen had long been in possession of the Talook of Hichapur (written also Etchapur, Itchapur or Hitchapur). On the 4th of January 1774, the President laid before the Board 243 gold coins which were delivered to him by Nubkissen as a Royalty, having been found in that talook. It was ordered that they should be delivered to the Treasury of the Khalsa, reserving such as had the fairest impression to be sent home to the Court of Directors as they seemed to be very ancient and curious.

In the same year Nubkissen offered Rs. 500 for the farm of the Soubah Bazar to be continued to him in perpetuity. He solicited the usual sanad. Its *jumma* in the previous year was Rs. 250. The bazar's contiguity to the Raja's dwelling house made him desirous of the grant, but it had been the custom to let the bazars of Calcutta for one year only at the commencement of each year. The Raja's proposal for farming the Soubah Bazar in perpetuity was accepted. Next year one Raghu Nath Mitter wanted to establish a rival bazar on his own ground adjoining Soubah Bazar. Nubkissen made a complaint. Raghu Nath Mitter's attempt was foiled. He had obtained no sanad from the President, and it was contrary as well to the general regulations as to the custom of the country that a bazar, hat, or ganj should be established without such a sanad. Nubkissen's petition and the orders passed thereon are inserted below.

Extract of the Proceedings at a Committee of Revenue, held at Fort William, the 7th December 1775.

Read the following Arzee from Nabokishen :—

I beg leave to represent that Rughu Nath Miter being evil disposed towards me wants to ruin Soubah Bazar and to establish a new bazar on his own ground adjoining to the other. I have been farmer for a long time and am possessed of a sannad in perpetuity. If

you will please to take the matter into consideration, you will find nothing but viciousness and erroneous conduct in Rugoo Mitre. Some time ago Ram Behary Seet whose land is near the bazar applied to the Superintendent of the Calsa for leave to establish a bazar on his own ground. It was not granted to him. The then Superintendent is now in Calcutta. There are many persons possessed of ground hereabouts. Should Rogonat succeed, all these persons will on the same principle apply. I therefore request that you will reprove Rugoo Mitre and order him to lay aside his project.

The President's information thereon :—

Nubkissen Maharajah made to me a regular complaint against Rugoo Mitre, before he preferred it to the Board, my interference alone having been found insufficient. On the receipt of it, knowing the erection of a bazar was contrary to the established custom of the country until a sannad should first be obtained from Government to authorise it, I sent for Ragoo Mitre and enquired the truth of the circumstance which he confirming and promising to destroy it if I thought proper to direct it, I gave him a verbal order to put it down immediately; as he did not comply with this, Nubkissen preferred to the Board this representation.

SENTIMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE.

It is particularly forbid by the General Regulations, and is contrary to the custom of the country that any person shall establish bazars, hauts, or gunjes without sannads from the President, and it seems from the vicinity of the situations of the Sobah Bazar and Rugoo Mitre's house that no bazar can be established there without prejudice to the grant lately made by the Government to Nobkissen.

Agreed therefore that Rugoo Mitre be obliged to enter into a Mochalaca to destroy the bazar he has erected and desist from such undertaking for the future, and ordered he or his vakeel do attend at the next meeting.

Extract from the Proceedings at a Committee of Revenue, held at Fort William, the 8th January 1776.

The vakeel of Rugoo Metre attends the Committee, being asked, if he has any sunnad for establishing a bazar, replied he has not ; he is then made acquainted with the Committee's Resolution of the 7th ultimo and directed to give a Machalaka that he will not establish a bazar without previously obtaining a sannad from Government.

In 1777 a question arose as to the precise limits and contents of the village or mahal granted to the Raja. In the

sanad, it is worthy of note, Nubkissen is described as 'the high and powerful Maharaja Nobkissen Bahadre.' In a petition, which was considered in December 1777, Nubkissen stated that he had not been put in possession of Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, Raje Bazar and the sayer of Baug Bazar. An inquiry was made and it was found that the land-rents of Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, and Raje Bazar were included in the mahal of Sootanutty. It was decided, however, that the *jumma* of Ram Bazar and Raje Bazar was to be deducted from the *malguzarry* to be paid by Raja Nubkissen as those grants were still to be held by Cossinaut [Kashi Nath] and Rauje Bullub [Raj Bullubh] respectively. The following are the original papers.

Ordered that the Resolution be also transmitted to the Khalsa with orders to the Superintendent to conform to it.

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), *December 16th*, 1777.

Ordered that the Secretary do apply to the Secretary to the Calcutta Committee to know whether the Aumildary Perwannah has been delivered to Condrop Dass for the farm of part of the Hidgelee Districts, if Rajah Nobkissen has been put in possession of the lands ordered him by the Board, and if he has received the Aumildary Perwannah. In case the Perwannah have not been delivered to Condrop Dass and Rajah Nobkissen, that he will immediately order them to be drawn out, so that they may be laid before the Board before they break up.

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), *December 19th*, 1777.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen, delivered in by the Governor-General, together with a Note from the President of the Calcutta Committee.

Translation of a Petition from Rajah Nobkissen.

The Council having been graciously pleased to approve of my request, the gentlemen of the Committee yesterday (the 17th day of December) granted me an order of possession under English signatures and the seal of the Company. Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, Raje Bazar, which have from of old been under Sootalutty and yield a revenue of about two thousand rupees, as also the sayer of Baug Bazar, which is at present desolate and pays no jumma, have not, however, been included in the above order; and I have to pray therefore that orders may be given to the Committee to put me in possession of these muhals agreeable to the terms of my request.

NOTE FROM MR. HOLME.

TO THE HON'BLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.,
Governor-General.

HON'BLE SIR,

Upon inquiry I find that the land rents of Ram Bazar, Soobah Bazar, Charles Bazar, and Raje Bazar (being a gunge granted to Rajah Rauje Bullub) are included under the Mahal of Sootanooty.

Annual Revenue :

Rs.

500 ... Soobah Bazar, held by sunnad to Nobkissen.

700 ... Ram Bazar, do. do. Cossinaut.

850 (1184) ... Charles Bazar, farmed out annually by the Company.

150 ... Raje Bazar, held by sunned to Rauje Bullub.

I understand from Nobkissen that he wants to have the fixed rents of the three bazars held by sunnad as above to be paid to him, the sunnads to continue as heretofore. Also that the jumma of Charles Bazar should be comprised in his grant.

I am, with respect, etc.,
(Signed) J. HOLME.

19*th December* 1777.

Agreed that the Calcutta Committee of Revenue be written to as follows :—

TO MR. JOHN HOLME, *President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.*

GENTLEMEN,

As we understand that Ram Bazar and Raje Bazar are included in the mahl of Sootanutty, lately granted to Rajah Nobkissen, we direct that you deduct the amount of their jumma from the malgazarry to be paid by Rajah Nobkissen, as these grants must still be held by Rajah Raje Bullub and Cossinaut, who have sunnuds for them, and who must pay the rent of them direct to Government.

We are, etc.

FORT WILLIAM,
The 19*th December* 1777.

In the list of *amilnamas* laid before the Committee on the 23rd October 1777, by the President, Nubkissen is described as Zemindar of Hunehapore. And in a list of perwanas to the talookdars of the Zilla Calcutta, laid before the Committee

on 24th October 1777, Nubkissen is mentioned as talookdar of village Mahinderpore.

In 1778 there were fresh attempts to set up a rival hât in Sootanutty. They were made by an influential gentleman, Madan Dutt, and a comparatively insignificant person, Jugmohun Sooree, but these attempts also failed. The original papers in this case are rather long and they may be left to speak for themselves.

Petition.

6th November 1778.

TO THE HON'BLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.,

Governor-General, &c., Members of the Hon'ble the Supreme Council of Fort William.

The Humble Petition of Rajah Nabo Krishna, Calcutta Inhabitant.

MOST HUMBLY SHEWETH :—

That in the Village of Sootalutty Haut and Bazar there was formerly a Moorish Idgah (a place where the Moormen in general, inhabitants of this settlement, used to go to worship every year) one Madan Dutt of Calcutta by some means or other possessed himself of the said Idgah without having obtained any pattahs from the Collector's office for that place or paying any attention to the Laws of Mahomed. The said Madun Dutt with a view to his own emoluments have erected on this spot of ground a new bazar without authority which bazar greatly injured the rents of your Petitioner's bazar and haut of Sootanlooty. Your Petitioner finding himself thus injured complained to the Calcutta Committee, who were pleased to order an ammin and four peons with a parwannah to destroy the said new bazar. But the said Madan Dutt and his people paid no attention either to the parwannah or the ammin and peons but beat and drove them away. Since which he the said Madan Dutt established on the same spot a new haut which greatly prejudiced the Malguzarry of Sootanlooty hauts and bazar, the rents of which formerly amounted to the sum of 3,350 rupees as will appear by the Collector's books :—

Also the Subah Bazar in the Districts at Sootanlooty belong to the Talookdary of your petitioner; your Petitioner having had the Subah Bazar sunnud from the Government granted him a long time

ago in perpetuity. Now one Juggomohan Sooree, finding Madan Dutt had taken such steps of erecting bazar and hauts of his own with impunity, raised a body of sepoys with firelocks and bayonets and by force of arms erected a bazar in the main road, which is also under your petitioner's talook and in his golah barry by which your Petitioner is greatly prejudiced and sustains heavy losses.

Your Petitioner has heard that it has been represented to the Council by the bazar people that he has made uncustomary collections from them. This is utterly void of truth, as will appear from the cabooliets of the people to whom he rented the tobacco and betel leaf mahals, and if on enquiry it should appear that he has received anything beyond what has been usually paid for the three years prior to the date of his grant, your Petitioner is ready to forfeit three times the value agreeably to the tenor of his sunnud. The shop-keepers and bazar people are poor ignorant men who know not how to write, and the petition given in their names is well known to have been fabricated by Madan Dutt from motives of enmity to your Petitioner, thereby hoping to avail himself of necessary time for enquiry into this circumstance to establish his own bazar and hauts. The bazar people and shop-keepers request permission to erect a new haut and bazar; this has never hitherto been permitted to the prejudice of the established ones. If they were dissatisfied with coming to your Petitioner's bazar, they ought to go to other established bazars, in which case your Petitioner could make no objection.

Your Petitioner therefore now humbly requests that the Hon'ble Board will be pleased to depute an ammin to the said old haut and bazar of Sootanlooty to examine the shop-keepers and bazar peoples on oath, when should it be found that he has over collected anything he is willing to repay it three times. Your Petitioner further requests that people on the part of Government may be sent to destroy the bazar and hauts newly erected by Madan Dutt and Juggomohan Sooree as likewise that Negabans may be stationed to prevent the re-establishment of this bazar and hauts, as also to prevent any further disputes.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound
shall ever pray, &c.

P.S.—The gentlemen of the Committee having on a former occasion defined and assisted the rights of Government, it may not be improper to annex to my representation, the formal decree on which the prayer of my Petition is grounded to shew the equity of such prayer and that I am warranted in making it by the usage of the country repeatedly and formally declared by Government.

PROCEEDINGS.

To MR. JOHN EVELYN,

Acting President, &c., Members of the Calcutta Committee of Revenue.

GENTLEMEN,

Enclosed we transmit you the copy of a petition which has been presented to us in behalf of Rajah Nobkissen.

We desire you will refer to our former orders on this subject, and we recommend it to you, if you have not already decided upon that reference, to summon Madan Dutt to shew cause why you shall not proceed to the abolition of the bazars erected by him, and if he can produce no authority for them, they must be abolished.

We are, &c.,
(Sd.) WARREN HASTINGS.
(Sd.) P. FRANCIS.
(Sd.) EDW. WHELER.

FORT WILLIAM,
The 6th November 1778.

To MR. EDWARD GOLDING,

President, &c., Provincial Council for the Division of Calcutta.

GENTLEMEN,

We have received your letter of the 16th ultimo, accompanying your proceedings on the subject of the complaints of Rajah Nobkissen against Madan Dutt.

We have in consequence resolved to abolish the bazar erected by Madan Dutt and we have issued our instructions for this purpose to the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records.

We are, &c.,
(Sd.) WARREN HASTINGS.
(Sd.) RU D. BARWELL.
(Sd.) P. FRANCIS.
(Sd.) EDWD. WHELER.

FORT WILLIAM,
The 8th January 1779.

Mr. Vansittart's Minute on the Bazar is somewhat tediously long, but it contains many points of general and historic interest and may, therefore, be inserted.

MR. VANSITTART'S MINUTE.

As the dispute between Rajah Nobkissen and Moden Dutt has not only long employed the attention of the Committee, but also engaged the notice of the Board who have issued to us repeated orders on the subject, I think we shall best discharge our duty and fulfill their expectations by presenting it in every point of view and discussing the various objects, which are contained in its compass, for it is not a concern which affects only two individuals, but involves public and political questions, which greatly interest and merit the consideration of Government. It is our duty to explain and the province of a superior power to judge, assisted by such information as we may be able to supply.

I shall record my opinion, previously to the general resolution of the Committee, that it may be more compact and full than any which I could possibly blend with the sentiments of the other members, however unanimous we might be.

In order to make the subject entire, I must unite the two points on which we have received the orders of the Board. The first is, Rajah Nobkissen's complaint against Moden Dutt for erecting a bazar in Sootanatee without the sanction of Government, and by this unauthorized proceeding injuring a public bazar which he (Rajah Nobkissen) holds in its vicinity by virtue of a sunnud. The second is the complaint of the tahbeezarries or hucksters of Calcutta against Rajah Nobkissen for exacting more than the authorized duties and by his oppressions necessitating them to quit his talook.

With respect to the first complaint Moden Dutt has denied that he has erected a bazar, alleging that the test of a bazar is the collection of duties and making the weights and scales, neither of which he has ever practised, but has taken ground rent.

To deny the right of Government to establish public bazars, is to deprive it of part of the resources which qualify it to perform the functions of supremacy by controlling and protecting its subjects and providing for the exigencies of the State. To deny the exclusive privilege of public bazars, is to frustrate this right of Government and to commit injustice towards the talookdar or farmers to whom the faith of Government is pledged and who is promoting in a subordinate capacity the public good. To erect a private bazar is not only to create all the evils stated in the foregoing proposition, but to destroy pre-eminence of Government and to assume the powers which it delegates to others.

RAJAH BAHADUR HARENDRA KRISHNA.

If such be the right of Government and if the force of it be so strong as to be felt by the individual who is now accused of having erected a private bazar, shall any person be suffered to invade it by indirect methods and by subtle reasoning? However, I will examine the arguments which have been produced. The first is that Moden Dutt has only taken ground rent.

A spot of ground, before almost, if not entirely, uninhabited, becomes on a sudden a public mart, and is crowded with those very persons who used to resort to the public bazar held by Rajah Nobkissen. The market days are observed, and Rajah Nobkissen's bazar and hauts of Sootanotee have been desolated.

This is incontrovertible evidence that Moden Dutt's bazar is used instead of Raja Nobkissen's, that it is frequented by the same persons, and that it has been so effectually appropriated to the same purposes as to render the other useless.

However, I shall consider the distinction pointed out by Moden Dutt that he has only received rent, or, in other words, I will endeavour to mark the limits which divide the natures of dwelling houses and markets. I think it may be admitted that the tenant of a dwelling house may set up a shop in it and maintain himself by his sales. I would admit also that three or four or more dwelling houses of this kind might be collected together and would not be taken notice of. But should an individual step forth, and encourage the tenants of public bazars to relinquish the protection of Government and place themselves under his patronage; should he assign them ground and exempting them from duties, charge them with house rents which will be proportionably enhanced, as the bazar flourishes, will the Government tamely suffer such an injury, alarming in its immediate consequences and more dangerous in its future?

There are various kinds of markets in this town, a bazar is one, which is open every day, and a haut is frequented on particular days. There are two kinds of shop-keepers in the bazars. The moodies who keep a shop in the houses, in which they reside, and the tahbuzarries who expose their goods on stalls or in temporary shops in the day time and return to their own houses in the evening; the utmost indulgence, to which an individual can have any pretentions, is to let his ground to moodies, who are his tenants in the same manner as any other persons who may inhabit his houses. However, Government may certainly restrain such shop-keepers, should they increase to too great a number and injure the revenue, particularly if they have

one general landlord and patron, as no individual has a right to convert to his own use, or to suppress the duties which appertain to Government. But the tahbuzarries are to be regarded in a very different light. They come to a spot of ground appropriated to the use of a market and with no other intention than to vend their articles which are usually of a perishable nature and must be sold within the day, such as fish, greens, &c.

The public bazars are so necessary that they claim the care of Government. They should not be left to chance or to the pleasure of individuals, but Government should provide them and place them under proper regulation. The ease, nay the very existence of the people, depends upon them, as they circulate the conveniences and necessaries of life throughout the country.

I wish that the customs of bazars had been more fully explained in the answer, which has been delivered by the canongoes. We are, however, informed that the duties are at first fixed and cannot be altered afterwards. But I presume, although it is not expressed, that the rule for fixing them is the custom of the spot, which varies in every part of the provinces.

The tahbuzarries relate some circumstances peculiar to Calcutta, which do not apply to bazars in other places, such as the establishment of the Custom House, the appointment of Negabanns, &c.

A nation gradually establishing their influence, and exercising authority under various forms, may have created changes, I may say some confusion in the principal seat of their residence by blending customs and acting at different times from different principles, our records give us no insight into the Regulations of the Custom House, nor are they of any importance. We are to look to the present system of letting the bazars to farm which commenced from the last change, and established duties, if none were collected before. The bazars have yielded a revenue to Government and the duties have formed the assets which have enabled the farmers to fulfill their engagements. The duties are now a customary branch of the revenue, and the collection of them is authorized by the practice in all other parts of the country, as well as by the increase of population and wealth which so amply supplies Calcutta with the means of paying them.

A market is a place where authority must be exercised to regulate the weights and scales, to preserve order, and to afford protection to the persons who frequent it ; can such authority exist independently of the Government? Moden Dutt argues that the assemblage of

shops in his ground is not a bazar, because there are no officers of the market, and because no mark is affixed to the weights and scales. But it is not a plain inference from these premises that a market ought not to be entrusted to an individual who cannot station in it the officers necessary to regulate and control it.

A talookdar is dependant upon the Government which can fix or reduce the duties, but can the Government fix or reduce the rent which an individual is to receive from his own tenants? The truth of the assertion of the Vakeel of the Moden Dutt cannot be denied that a person has a right to let his ground for the most he can. What then will ensue from the toleration of such bazars? The public bazars will be desolated and their revenue entirely lost, the inhabitants, who have been used to depend upon them for provisions, will be left at the mercy of individuals, who are proprietors of ground. What disturbances will arise between landholders who will mutually oppose each other and sometimes use force to support their respective bazars? The evil will be still greater if a powerful man should acquire an extensive influence, or a number of men should combine to enrich themselves by oppressing their fellow-subjects; an income might grow from the spoils of the abolished duties of Government, under the name of rent to an amount considerably above the duties. The shop-keepers can have no remedy except from changing their situation and private influence or combinations might deprive them of that.

I cannot avoid taking notice of an alteration in the second petition of the dokandars. In the first they style themselves *tahbuzarries* and say *they have been used to sell divers articles in several bazars in Calcutta and to return home in the evening with the proceeds.* In the second petition they style themselves dokandars; and in the petition, which they delivered to the Board, shop-keepers. I am inclined to think this change was suggested to them, as it agrees with the means which have been made use of to prove that the shop-keepers in Madan Dutt's ground are residents and not *tahbuzarries.*

Another argument adduced by the dokandars is, that there are many private bazars. The interposition of Government therefore is the more necessary to suppress the evil in the present instance, as the abolition of all other private bazars will follow, whenever the talookdars or farmers who suffer by them shall lodge complaints.

An argument lately adduced by Moden Dutt is, that some merchants who reside in the bazars have settled some shop-keepers under

their verandahs or in the ground adjoining to their houses, which shop-keepers pay no duties to the talookdars or farmers who hold the bazars. Upon this principle Moden Dutt claims a right to settle shop-keepers on his ground. If such a custom does exist, the only inference from it is that a respect is shewn to those merchants by the talookdar, which cannot extend to one who in open opposition to him has erected a building purposely to contain shops, and, by enticing his shop-keepers from him, desolated his bazars.

The complaint of the tahbuzarries against the talookdar is very regular and will be enquired into. They have two modes of relief, whenever oppressed; one is by settling in some other authorized bazar, and the other by petitioning Government, the healing influence of whose care is spread through every order of men, and will equally protect the shop-keepers and talookdar.

The Committee have endeavoured to ascertain the standard by which the duties ought to be regulated. But the Duan can find only the following :—

Each Tahbuzarry stand per diem.

For Negabans	...	...	...	13 Cowries.
For Chowkeydarry	...	...	...	6 Gundas, 3 Cowries.
For Birt	...	...	...	2 „ 2 „

He, however, thinks that the proper rule is the collections of the five past years. Raja Nobkissen represents that should it appear that he has received more than was usually paid in the three years prior to the date of his sunnud, he will forfeit three times the value agreeably to his sunnud. There is a stipulation in the English articles of agreement that should the Raja collect more duties than what have been always customarily received or at any time hereafter might be lawfully received by, or on the part of the Company, he shall pay three times the amount by way of fine. But, as it will be almost impossible to ascertain either the amount of the collections of the five or of the three past years, I think that some equitable standard should be immediately formed, to which the talookdar and farmers should be absolutely and unalterably restricted.

But as we have not yet taken this last subject into our consideration, I shall dwell upon it no longer. I shall conclude by expressing my opinion with respect to the new bazar erected by Moden Dutt that it ought to be abolished, even if he should establish all the points which he is now contending for. For as it requires no more than common penetration to pierce through the disguise, so it needs no more than the exertion of the ordinary powers of Government to rescue its rights

from an actual though artful violation, which would create endless mischief by the contagion of its examples.

The above was written before I came to the Committee to-day. I shall therefore subjoin a few lines in answer to the President's questions.

To the 1st Question.—I am of opinion that Moden Dutt has erected a bazar and that circumstantial evidence on this subject fully establishes this point. But as the evasion of Moden Dutt is new, I think that it should be represented to the Governor-General and Council both that they may be apprized of the practice and decide themselves on the fact.

To the 2nd Question.—I do not think Moden Dutt has shewn sufficient cause why it should not be abolished, though perhaps it may be found proper to abolish it under some limitations.

(Sd.) HENRY VANSITTART.

The last public office of importance that Nubkissen held has now to be mentioned. As far back as 1776, he had been entrusted with the management of the affairs of the Burdwan Ráni, the Ráni of Ambooah, and he stood security for her debts, as the following papers will show :—

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), *on April 25th*, 1777.

Secretary submitted following better from the Provincial Council of Burdwan.

"The Superintendent of the Adawlut has represented to us that he finds many difficulties in summoning persons complained against, who are connected with the Ranny of Ambooa or her officers, and particularly in complaints of debts against the Ranny herself he has not been able to persuade her to send a vakeel properly authorized to answer for her to such complaints. That the Vakeel at Burdwan, in reply to his remostrances, has in general informed him that Rajah Nobkissen in Calcutta would answer to any complaints against the Ranny for debt as the management of her affairs had been intrusted to him ....."

[*Answer*.—The Council don't understand the difficulty. Proceed in the Rani's case as in other cases ; she must send a vakeel properly authorized or suffer judgment in default.]

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *May 30th*, 1780.

Letter from Burdwan Council (Mr. William Marriott, &c.,) dated August 9th, 1779.

"We have received your letter of the 13th ultimo containing orders relative to the claims on the estate of the late Ranny (-Rani) of

Amboah, and to propose some means of liquidating the same, also directing us to enquire and report to you who had charge and management of the collections of Amboah during the period of Rajah Nobkissen's securityship. . . . . .

In reply to your directions respecting who had the charge and management of the collections of Amboah during the period of Rajah Nobkissen's securityship, we must observe that we are wholly ignorant to what period the said securityship extended, but we have learnt from an examination of Kissenram Metre [?=Mitter] that he, Kissenram Metre, has had the entire management of the collections at Amboah from the commencement of the Bengal year 1183, when Nobkissen became security, to the present time ; that by order of the late Ranny of Amboah, until the time of her death, which happened on the 20th Augun 1184, he remitted the amount of the collections, excepting the Ranny's expenses, to Rajah Nobkissen in Calcutta, and after her death and by order of the present Ranny of Burdwan, he remitted the collections in the same manner during the remainder of the year 1184 ; and that, during the whole late year 1185, he remitted the whole of the collections to the Ranny of Burdwan ; and he avows himself solely a servant of the two Rannys."

Nubkissen in consequence of his ability and special experience of the affairs of Burdwan was appointed to the Sezawulship or control of the revenues of that district in 1780. The old Rani of Ambooah died in 1777. The lady, who was Rani on the occasion of Nubkissen's appointment as Sezawul, and who was mother of the infant Raja, put every obstacle in Nubkissen's way, and stringent measures had to be taken to enforce her obedience to orders, as the following paper will show :—

4th August 1780.

The Board taking into consideration the petition of Raja Nobkissen and the report of the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records thereupon—

Resolve, that whereas Rajah Nobkissen was furnished with a perwannah from Government to the Rajah and Ranny of Burdwan, directing them to act in concert with him as Sezawul for the year 1187, in farming the settlement of the current year, making the collections, &c., her refusal to proceed to Burdwan, her not permitting Nobkissen to see the Rajah, and her sending for the zemindary officers from

Burdwan to Bansbariah, are acts of direct disobedience and contumacy, and highly detrimental to the authority of Government.

That the delay which is occasioned by this disobedience in holding the Mofusil Pooneah and making the collections and remittances of the revenue, is not only attended with great present inconvenience to Govenment by retarding the payment of such part of the public revenue as has become due, but may eventually be the cause of actual loss to Government.

That it is highly incumbent on the Board, not only to take effectual measures to prevent the above consequences, but to support their authority in the present instance.

Agreed therefore that the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records be directed to proceed immediately to Bansbariah, and that the Sezawul do accompany him thither. That he read again to the Ranny of Burdwan the perwannah appointing the Sezawal, and require her immediate return to Burdwan with the Rajah and zemindary officers, and that she give an assurance that she will punctually obey the Board's orders contained in the perwanna relating to the appointment of the Sezawul.

That in case of her refusal to comply with these orders, or shewing any tendency to evade them, the Superintendent do then peremptorily insist on seeing the Rajah of Burdwan, and acquaint him that the Board have thought proper on account of the contumacy shewn by the Ranny, his mother, and her refusal to yield to obedience to their orders, to divest her of all authority and control in the management of his zemindary.

That he is required by the Governor-General and Council to proceed to Burdwan to take upon himself the charge and management of the zemindary and to make the collection of the revenues in conjunction with the Sezawul of Government, and in the manner pointed out in his perwannah, and to appoint proper officers to conduct the business of his zemindary in his own name and independent of the Ranny.

That the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records proceed with all possible expedition with the Rajah to Burdwan, and on his arrival there, proclaim the Rajah's authority over the province, require him to appoint proper officers for the management of the business of the zemindary, to hold the Mofusil Pooneah, and make the collection in conjunction with the Sezawul.

That the Superintendent be empowered to call on the Commanding Officer at Chandernagore for the assistance of an officer with two

or three companies of sepoys, if he judges it necessary, to attend the Rajah to Burdwan, as well to prevent any insidious attempts on his person in the way thither, as to announce his return and the authority vested in him with greater dignity to the inhabitants of the province.

That the necessary orders be given to the Commanding Officer at Chandernagore in consequence of the preceding resolution.

Nubkissen's administration during the first year of his office was remarkably successful. He managed the collection of the revenues so well that he paid the demands of Government in advance without any trouble or embarrassment to the Board. It was, therefore, determined that he should continue in the office of Sezawul for the next year. On this occasion also his powers were defined and enlarged and steps taken to help him in the due discharge of his duties. The following document bears testimony to his services and throws light on the situation of affairs at Burdwan at that time.

26th January, 1781.

Read again the Superintendent of the Khalsa's letter under date 26th of August last, entered in consultation the 12th of September.

The Board taking into consideration the subject of the above petition of Rajah Nobkissen are of opinion that the Rhanee has acted very improperly in taking away the Rajah, farmers, or public servants at this season of the year, and during the heavy collections, without the smallest intimation given to Government or permission received from them.

That the absence of the Rajah and public officers at this time from the Sudder Cutcherry of the district may not only contribute to prejudice the collection, but to spread an unnecessary alarm amongst the inhabitants of the district, and induce them to leave their habitations and neglect the culture of the lands for the future year.

That at the present crisis, when Bengal itself may become the seat of troubles, and when this Government will have occasion for all their resources, it behoves them to take special care of the revenues of so valuable a province as Burdwan, amounting to near 40 lacks of rupees, and that the continuing the management to the

Rhanee, a woman, and maintenance of her influence in the district during the present crisis is impolitical and improper.

That it is the opinion of this Board that, in order to preserve the tranquility of the Burdwan Province to prevent the operation of any intrigues on the part of the Rhanee and her adherents, she be required to reside at Amboa in the same manner as the mother of the former Rajah used to do until the further orders of the Board, but that the Rajah and public officers be directed to return to Burdwan immediately.

That as the Rhanee has on many occasions shewn her backwardness to comply with the orders of the Board, and may in the presen instance endeavour to evade them by returning to Burdwan, that the Nazir or Naib Nazir of the Khalsa be directed to proceed to Amboa, and place proper chokeys of peons round her house with strict directions not to suffer the Rhanee to return to Burdwan, nor any covered dooly or conveyance to pass without their being properly satisfied that the Rhanee is not in it, but not to enter her house or otherwise molest her, than by preventing her return to Burdwan till they have orders from the Board, and that the Supeintendent of the Khalsa Records do furnish the Nazir or Naib Nazir with a proper Warrant for executing this order by the sanction of the Board.

That as Rajah Nobkissen appears to have managed the collection of the revenues of this zemindary with so much success during the past year, and has paid the demands of Government in advance without the smallest trouble or embarrassment to the Board, he be continued in the office of Sezawul during the ensuing year, and directed to proceed with the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records to Burdwan immediately to take the most effectual measures under his control for securing such part of the revenues of the current year as may remain outstanding and for promoting the cultivation of the district, and enabling the Rajah and zemindary to afford a competent aid to Government in the following year.

That as it appears from the letter of the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records that an improper use has been made by Ram Caunt and others of their influence with the Rhanee, and that the property of the Rajah has been wasted and dissipated during his minority which is a fact of most public notoriety.

That Rajah Nobkissen be vested with authority to examine into the present state and accounts of the Rajah's household under the control of the Superintendent as above, and to use his endeavours

to discover and bring to account any property or effects of the Rajah which may have been secreted or embezzled by Ram Caunt or others of the Rhanee's officers during her management, and that if the Superintendent shall from the information he may receive have reason to think that Ram Caunt or any other persons employed by the Rhanee have embezzled or secreted any of the Rajah's property, that he shall be empowered, and is hereby directed by this Board for the security and recovery of the said p operty to take the persons suspected as above into custody and to set guards over their houses, or any other places, where the Superintendent may believe such property to be concealed in order to prevent its being conveyed away or misapplied.

That for the purpose of carrying the above orders and resolutions into execution, the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records be directed to proceed as soon as he conveniently can with Rajah Nobkissen to Amboa, and notify them to the Rajah and Rhanee, and that he from thence conduct the Rajah and such farmers, or public officers as may be at that place to Burdwan, and that any of the farmers or officers refusing to attend him thither, be forthwith dispossessed of their farms or offices. That on his arrival at Burdwan he publicly notify the discontinuance of the Rhanee's authority in all matters relating to the management of the zemindary collection of the revenues, or the Rajah's household.

That the Superintendent form an estimate of the necessary expenses for the maintenance of the Rajah's household with the assistance of Rajah Nobkissen, and transmit the same to the Board for their approbation.

That the Superintendent do continue to reside at Burdwan till the further orders of the Board, and be directed to give every aid and support in his power to the Sezawul to enable him to comply with the foregoing resolutions of the Board.

Nubkissen applied himself with a will to his new duties and exhibited rare powers of industry and financial administration. Mr. G. G. Ducarel, Commissioner at Burdwan, wrote to say that the Sezawal had since his arrival been taken up in making the mofussil settlement. The following papers give some evidence of the kind of work he did :—

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *5th June*, 1781.

Read the following translation of a letter from Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawal of Burdwan :—

"In consequence of an order from the Supreme Council, I have

discovered from the accounts upwards of 18 lakhs of rupees was the Mohasil or profit of Burdwan, &c., in the years 1185 and 1186, exclusive of the Ranny's dowry money borrowed from Mahajans and the expense of despatching the Government's revenue. Six lakhs of rupees are fully sufficient for the expenses of Maharajah Deraje Tejh Chund Bahadur; the Ranny, and Ram Caunt, are answerable for the remainder."

Ordered that a copy of the above letter be transmitted to Mr. Ducarel at Burdwan, that the Sezawal be required to bring before him the profits [? proofs] and vouchers of the amounts therein alluded to, that Mr. Ducarel be directed to enter into a minute investigation of them and examine the evidences upon oath which the Sezawal shall produce in support of his charges, and to grant him such assistance as he may require for apprehending the persons of his evidences.

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, 26*th June*, 1781.

Letter (20th June) from Mr. Ducarel, Commissioner at Burdwan:

"I have been honoured with your letter of the 5th instant enclosing a petition from Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawul of Burdwan, and shall be particularly attentive to the execution of your commands contained therein. The Sezawul and Zamindarry Amlah have since their arrival at this place been entirely taken up in making the mofussil settlement, which has prevented their attending me for the purpose of proceeding on the investigation directed.

In order to enable me to afford the Sezawul the assistance directed in your letter in apprehending the persons of this evidence, I beg leave to represent that it is necessary Captain Long should be furnished with authority to supply Sepoys on my written requisition in the customary form."

[This letter (dated 20th June) was circulated on 22nd June, and at the meeting of Council on 26th June "the Board agreed that the order required by the Commissioner should be immediately issued to the Commanding Officer at that station" (Burdwan).]

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, 5*th July*, 1781.

Letter (4th July) from Mr. Ducarel:

"In conformity to your letter of the 5th June ultimo, Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawul of this province, has brought before me the following persons, servants and officers of the Rajah of Burdwan's household as evidences in support of the charges contained in his petition delivered to your Board:

Budden Chund Mojumdar, Carkon,
Sumboo Churn Ghose, Mohrir of the Dewan Dufter,
Kishencaunt Doss, Mohrir of the Treasury,
Ramjoy Burrall, Jumma Khurch Nuvrees of the Cansamany,
Juggut Bullub Roy Mitter, Cansamany Seristadar,
Juggut Narain Mitter, Naib of the Cansamany,

from whom I have received the accounts, receipts, and disbursements of the Zemindary of Burdwan for the two years of the Ranny's management, *viz.*, 1185 and 1186, the original of which in the Bengalee language, together with their respective translations, I have now the honour to lay before the Board. The purport of the said accounts together with the order in which they are arranged will appear from the Abstract H.

Agreeable to your directions contained in the above mentioned letter, I have examined the evidences which the Sezawul has produced in support of his charges upon oath, who have attested the accounts in the manner which will appear at the foot of each respectively."

The Board, taking into consideration the above report of the Commissioner at Burdwan, and accounts accompanying it, find that the sum of 11,19,570-1-14 Sicca rupees appear due from the Ranny to the Rajah for the period of her management.

Resolved that the Sezawul be directed to attach the profits of the Dowry, and hold them sequestered in satisfaction of this demand.

Resolved that the Commissioner in conjunction with the Sezawul do proceed in the business directed by his former commission, and give the Rajah and his officers every assistance required by them in recovering the amount of the above balance from those persons who may appear to have embezzled it.

Nubkissen for his consistent support of English interests is highly unpopular with a certain class. Their hero is Nuncomar; their authority is Bolts, an English Thersites in the early days of English supremacy in the East. They are eager to grasp at every bit of scandal that the tongue or pen of a malicious imagination may have invented about Nubkissen. It has been said or suggested by some of this class that Nubkissen as Sezawul of Burdwan was guilty of much oppression and many malpractices. There does not seem,

however, to be a record of any. In March, 1781, it appears there was a complaint against him of false imprisonment. The person imprisoned was one Gocul Chunder Chowdhry; and on his behalf his Gomastah, Abhai Churn Ghose, instituted proceedings by an affidavit on the Crown side of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. The complaint was false, and therefore it proved as abortive as the complaints of Gocul Sonar and Ramnaut. Gocul Chunder Chowdhry had indeed been imprisoned by the Maharaja, but upon a just cause and in the exercise of his legal rights as Sezawul. To leave no doubt as to the facts and the history of the case the following original papers are inserted in full :—

COUNCIL, LAW DEPARTMENT, *March 23rd*, 1781.

AFFIDAVIT—In the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, Crown Side. *The King vs. Rajah Nubkissen.*

Abhai Churn Ghose, Cash-keeper and Gomastah for Gocul Chunder Chowdry, the plaintiff above named, maketh oath and saith :—

That from the fourth day of Phalgun last past (answering nearly to the 12th day of February last) until the 11th day of the said month of Phalgun, he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, was confined against his will and consent in a dwelling house of Rajah Nobkissen in the chucklah of Burdwan in the Province of Bengal, and from the said 11th day of Phalgun until the fourth day of Choite (which answer to the 14th day of March instant), and which is the last day this deponent saw the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, has been kept a prisoner and still is kept a prisoner, as this deponent believes, in his own house by the order of the said Rajah Nobkissen without any legal authority or warrant for that purpose obtained by the said Rajah Nobkissen as this deponent is informed and believes, but merely to compel the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to pay to him a large sum of money as rent for certain lands which he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, holds under the Rajah of Burdwan and under the Ranny (mother of the said Rajah), and which rent this deponent or cash-keeper and gomastah for the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry has already paid to the said Rajah and Ranny, to whom the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry is bound to pay it, and this deponent saith that the said Rajah Nobkissen is Sezawul

or Collector of Revenue in the service of the United Company of merchants of England trading to the East India for the chuchlah or districts of Burdwan aforesaid and therefore is subject to the Jurisdiction of this Hon'ble Court as this deponent is advised and believes.

Sworn before me this 20th day of March 1781.

J. HYDE.

WRIT.

CROWN SIDE.—On reading the within affidavit I do order that a writ of Habeas Corpus in the usual form do issue from the Office of the Clerk of the Crown directed to the within named Rajah Nobkissen commanding him to bring up the body of G. C. C. confined in his custody (unlawfully as it is said), together with day and cause of taking and detaining the said G. C. C. immediately before me or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Judge at Fort William in Bengal or any other Justice of the same Court at the Court House in Calcutta at Fort William aforesaid. Dated this 20th day of March 1781.

(*Signed*) J. HYDE.

[Mr. George Wroughton, Attorney for the Hon'ble Company, writes (March 21st) to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Mr. Isaac Baugh, enclosing the above papers and asking instructions.

He says:—"At the same time inform them (the Board) that I have enquired of Rajah Nobkissen, to whom the Habeas Corpus is directed, the reason of prisoner's confinement, from whom I learn that he is the farmer of the purgunnahs of Bhant Ghauzee, Badepoorea and Dhauzy in the District of Burdwan, and that he is imprisoned for a balance of revenue due to the Hon'ble Company on account of the aforementioned pergunnahs, amounting to about the sum of 4,500 sicca-rupees."]

ORDERED—(March 23rd) that the Company's Attorney do instruct the Company's Counsel to plead that G. C. C. is in the District of Burdwan, a farmer of the public revenue, of which Rajah Nobkissen, is in virtue of his office of Sezawul, the Collector on the part of Government, to whom the said Chowdry being now in balance, Raja Nobkissen has in consequence, by virtue of his office, and the power delegated to him by the Governor-General and Council, a right to demand payment of such balance from the said farmer, and to confine him, and to use such other means as the law and usages of this country do warrant for enforcing the recovery of it; and further, that the plaintiff having confessed the defendant is in

possession of the office of Sezawul on behalf of the Company, and he himself a farmer of the revenue, the right of the defendant to proceed with the plaintiff as he has done is thereby proved; and that the Company's Attorney do also instruct their Counsel not to enter any further than here specified into the merits of this cause but to rest the issue of it upon the facts abovementioned.

The opinion delivered by the Chief Justice in the cause wherein Radha Govind Sing was plaintiff and Mr. Hosea and other defendants applying directly to the present case.

ORDERED—That the following extract from it, as it already stands recorded on the Consultation of the 20th of February last, be here entered.

Extract from the speech delivered by the Chief Justice :

" I thought it was understood that the right of the Company, executed by their Provincial Council, of getting lands for debts, due to the Government, was meant to be contested in this action. The Counsel for the defendant disclaimed controverting that right, and as far as the Court can judge by what has already passed in it, it entertains no doubt whatsoever of that right. In the judgment given in the case of Camaul-ul-Dien, the final opinion of the Court was that, in matters of Revenue, by which I mean the settling of the quantum of the debt due to Government, the Provincial Council, or those officers to whom the trust was committed, had full and complete jurisdiction, exclusive of the interference of this Court. We have given sanction to their judgment." . . . . .

COUNCIL, LAW DEPARTMENT, *May 22nd*, 1781.

Range 166 *Vol.* 84.

The following letter from the Company's Attorney to the Secretary with the return proposed to be made to the Habeas Corpus issued to Rajah Nobkissen having been sent in circulation for the orders of the Board, the Governor-General delivered the opinion thereafter entered, to which Mr. Wheler having subscribed, orders were signed accordingly.

GEORGE WROUGHTON,

Attorney to the Hon'ble Company.

To ISAAC BAUGH,

Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

DATED FORT WILLIAM,

April 6th, 1781.

"I request you will lay before the Hon'ble Board for their approval the enclosed copy of the return intended to be made to the Habeas Corpus issued to Rajah Nobkissen at the instance of Gocul Chunder Chowdry provided it meets with their sanction. The return has been revised and approved by Mr. Newman, Mr. Davies, and Mr. Lawrence on a meeting yesterday evening, and has since received the sanction of the Advocate-General, subject, however, to a circumstance whereon I must request you to procure me the advice and direction of the Hon'ble Board.

The return states the acts complained of to have been committed by Rajah Nobkissen in the performance of his office of Sezawul in the District of Burdwan, the duty of which office is stated on the return "to have been at and before the passing the Act of the thirteenth of George the Third to enforce payment of the revenues due to the Hon'ble Company within that district and to imprison persons owing the same without bail, &c." It has been thus formed under the idea that the office is not a *new* institution, and that it has been the *usage* in some places within the Provinces to collect the revenues by Sejawuls, and to imprison in case of non-payment, at least some short time previous to the time of passing the before-mentioned Act. The doubt which now arises is whether the nature of Rajah Nobkissen's office be as above stated, or whether extraordinary powers have not been superadded to those considered as incident to the office of Sejawul. Should the latter prove the case, the gentlemen seem to be of opinion it will be more advisable to alter the return in that respect and to state in lieu thereof that Rajah Nobkissen has confined the prisoner by virtue of his office of Sejawul, an appointment recently made by the Governor-General and Council, they having judged it an office requisite to be instituted for the better managing the territorial acquisitions and revenues entrusted to them by the before-mentioned Act."

Enclosure in Company's Attorney's Letter.

The Schedule to which the annexed writ refers.

"In obedience to the command in the annexed writ contained I do hereby humbly certify and return to the Hon'ble John Hyde, Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices, and to other, His Majesty's Justices of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, that in the District of Burdwan in the Province of Bengal there is a farm commonly called or known by the name of the Pergunnahs of Bhaul, Ghawzee, Bundepore, and Dhawree Mundelka, which farm now is and at the time of passing a certain Act made in the thirteenth year of the reign of His present Majesty King

RESIDENCE OF MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.—NORTH RANGE.

George the Third, entitled "An Act for establishing certain regulations for the better management of the affairs of the East India Company as well in India as in Europe," was part and parcel of the territorial acquisitions in such Act mentioned, and the rents and profits of the said farm now are and at such time as aforesaid were parcel of the revenue of the said Province of Bengal. That at the time of passing the Act aforesaid the said farm was and still is remaining in the possession of the said United Company as part and parcel of the said territorial acquisitions and revenues and at the time when the debt hereinafter mentioned accrued due was held in farm by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry in the annexed writ mentioned under the said United Company at a certain annual rent payable to them, the said United Company. That on the 12th day of February last, there then was and still is justly due and owing by and from the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to the said United Company for rent and revenue in arrear of the said farms the sum of 4,520 sicca rupees, and for which he was and is imprisoned by and under the authority hereinafter mentioned. That the late President and Council and Select Committee of Fort William aforesaid in the said Act mentioned previous to and at the time of passing the same Act exercised by themselves or their officers the whole management or government of the said farm (so being part of such territorial acquisitions) and also of right exercised a power by themselves or their officers to adjust and settle the accounts of farmers indebted to the said United Company for rents and revenues in arrear and of enforcing the payment of such revenue in arrear by imprisoning such farmers so being debtors as aforesaid without bail or mainprize for non-payment thereof, and which mode of procedure at the previous to the time of passing such Act was the known usage and custom in the Province of Bengal, Behar and Orissa in the enforcing the payment of such rent and revenue.

That the accounts of the said farm having been settled and which were actually settled by the proper officers of the said United Company, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry on such settlement, to wit, on the said 12th day of February, was found in arrear the said sum of sicca rupees 4,520, the justness of which upon such settlement allowed and confessed by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry and the amount of the same debt acknowledged by him to be due *to the said United Company*, and the said sum of 4,520 sicca rupees having been afterwards, to wit, on the said 12th day of February, demanded from the said Gocul

Query: If to the Company or the Rajah.

Chunder Chowdry, and which was so demanded of and neglected by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to be paid. The said Gocul Chunder Chowdry on the said 12th day of February last was lawfully taken and duly imprisoned by me and now is detained by me for the same debt so due to the said United Company as aforesaid. That at and previous to the time of such imprisonment I, the said Rajah Nobkissen, was a known officer of the said United Company, appointed by and acting under the authority of the said Governor-General and Council in the place or office of Sejawul in the District of Burdwan aforesaid, the duty of which office is and at such the time aforesaid was to enforce the payment of all revenue due, owing and in arrear to the said United Company in the district aforesaid and to imprison the person owing the same without bail or mainprize, in case of non-payment thereof until the full payment of such revenue in arrear. That in the matters aforesaid, I have acted only according to the duty of my office as Sezawul for the district aforesaid and which authorizes me according to the laws and usages of the Province of Bengal to keep and detain the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry in confinement without bail until the debt aforesaid shall be discharged. But in obedience to the command in the said annexed writ contained I now have the body of the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry before His Majesty's said Justices of the said Supreme Court of Judicature to do, receive and be subject to what His Majesty's said Justices shall consider of him in this behalf. Given under my hand this day of March 1781.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S OPINION.

Governor-General :—"It does not appear for what reason the extraordinary powers given to Rajah Nubkissen, if any such have been given, in cases which have no reference to the imprisonment of a farmer of the public revenue should be inserted, since as a Sezawul he possesses the power to imprison a farmer of the public revenue. May it not be proper to insert the clause proposed for amendment in addition to that which states the regular powers of the Sezawul?

The following further letter, having been received by the Secretary from the Company's Attorney, was circulated on 13th April and is now recorded:—

WROUGHTON TO BAUGH.

Dated April 11th, 1781.

"I request that you will communicate to the Hon'ble Board that I have just received official information from the Attorney of Gocul

Chunder Chowdry that the matter in contest between his client and Rajah Nobkissen is adjusted, and that therefore he does not intend to call for the return to the writ of Habeas Corpus issued some time ago."

Here ends this episode. In August or September 1781, both the Rajah of Burdwan, Maharajadhiraj Tej Chund Bahadur, and Maharaja Nubkissen, the Sezawul, made complaints in writing against certain acts of Mr. Austin, Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut at Burdwan. Those acts, they alleged, were beyond his legitimate authority and they had the effect of hindering them in the collection of the revenue. The Committee of Revenue expressed an opinion on the complaints, which was accepted by the Council and which ran as follows :—

1st.—The Committee are of opinion that such servants as have accepted assignments of the balances of rents in lieu of wages may undoubtedly demand payment of the same, and if coercion is necessary, they are to apply for assistance of the Revenue Cutcherry, and the collection to be enforced as a balance of rent, which in fact it is. It appears to the Committee that by the 8th Article of the Judicial Regulations, the Judge of the Dewanny Court has no right to interfere in these cases. The nature of the interference asserted to be made by the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut is not particularized, it appears, however, to the Committee.

2nd.—That the Aymadars of Burdwan having been subjected to the payment of rent, they are to be considered as Talookdars and subject to the same jurisdiction, as pointed out in that article of the Judicial Regulations.

3rd.—By the 14th Article of the Judicial Regulations the enquiry into the right and title to lands, as well as to the limits of the same, is within the jurisdiction of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut without any exception. Further experience may, however, suggest the propriety of some modification in this Article. The Committee of Revenue exercise the power of resuming grants of Baza Zemin, either where they have been collusively made or granted after certain periods, and delegate the same power to Zemindars, Farmers, and other officers employed under them in the collections. The exercise of the same powers by two distinct establishments will create confusion, and interference, of jurisdiction. The Committee of Revenue will

direct the Sezawul to report to them such instances of the interference of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut as occur, and will lay the same before the Supreme Board, who, from these instances, will be enabled to ascertain the proper rule to be laid down in such cases. In the interim it does not appear necessary to the Committee to issue any particular orders, as the vacation of the provincial Courts of Adawlut has taken place and will continue some time.

4th.—The mode of conduct prescribed to the Judge in the 31st Article of the Regulations with respect to Zemindars, Talookdars, Chowdries, and Landholders, or persons employed in the collections under what name soever immediately under the Committee of Revenue, or any Collector of the Revenues directs "that he is not to issue a summons to compel such person, being defendant in any cause, to appear, but in lieu thereof to issue a summons requiring such person, being a defendant, to appear personally, or by vakil, at a certain time." An attention to this Regulation on the part of the Judge will remove the inconvenience complained of in this Article.

In November of the same year a fresh complaint was made by Nubkissen against further illegal interferences of Mr. Hugh Austin, and the Council, in the Revenue Department, rebuked that officer for his illegal acts. The following was their decision :—

The Zemindar by ryats and farmers against farmers for encroachments and the like, their revenues are never realised until such disputes are settled. The officers of the Zemindarry in conjunction with those of the Sezawul determine such disputes and collect the revenues. Now Mr. Austin, paying no kind of attention to the usage of the country, opposes us, and has sent his peons to summon my brother, who is Tahsildar to Burdwan, and disgraced him in the presence of the farmers, &c. As none of the customs of the country are hidden from you, you must be sensible how much the revenues will suffer, when the Tehsildar is unable to support his consequence. I now hope that, as what has happened cannot be recalled, orders will be issued from the Council to Mr. Austin that in future he do not, by disgracing the officers, interrupt the collections, and, as the Zemindar's vakil is always in waiting, I request he may be directed to transact what business he may have with us through him, and, in case any of our officers should act contrary to the orders of the Huzyoor, that he be directed to represent it to the Council

for their determination, by which means all disputes and disturbances in the mofussil may be prevented."

ORDERED.—That a copy of the representation from the Sezawul of Burdwan accompanying the Committee's letter of the 26th of November, be transmitted to the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut at that station and that he be directed strictly to attend to the Board's orders of the 11th of September last, and positively forbid any further interference with respect to the Tannabhdars and Pykes than what immediately relates to his Foujdarry jurisdiction.

ORDERED—Also that he be informed that, as by the 18th Article of the Judicial Regulations the Tehsildar of Burdwan is exempted from the process of the Court, as well as from being compelled to personal appearance to the hurt of his credit among the farmers, the Board highly disapprove of the summons issued to him by the Judge.

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *January 3rd*, 1782.

Extract from the proceedings of the Committee of Revenue of the 24th December, 1781.

Petition of Teej Chund Bahadur :

"Chutt[a]r[1] Sing, the Etmaumdar of Boagree, has not sent a single cowry of revenue for the last three months, but has removed with all his people into the jungles.

"A Tehsildar resides on the spot to which he is retired who has no control over him, nor does he pay any attention to my letters. He owes an immense balance to Government, which he will not liquidate. Tillook Sing, his uncle, prays he may be appointed in his place and engages to pay his revenues regularly.

"I hope you will comply with this request, and that two companies of Sepoys may be sent to put Tillook Sing in possession, and to lay hold of Chutter Sing that measures may be taken for the recovery of his arrears to Government."

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *October 23rd*, 1781.

Letter from Mr. Hugh Austin, Judge of the Burdwan Dewanny Adawlut, dated September 18th, 1781, replying on the points in Articles 1, 2, and 4, in respect of Maharajah Nobkissen's complaints. It does not seem necessary to quote more than the final sentence :—

"How far the representation of the Sezawul is just, respecting my having occasioned impediments in the business of the revenue, I submit to your Hon'ble Board and request that in any future complaints that may be made against my conduct he may be directed

[1] Later, called Chitter Sing.

to state specifically what he has to charge me with and not by a vague and general detail of circumstances, wholly unsupported, prevent me from entering into a clear justification of my conduct."

It would seem that Nubkissen as Sezawul of Burdwan was the head and the complete representative of that district. If any person required anything to be done even by the Raja of Burdwan, he would have to work through the Sezawul. In September 1781 one Gunganarain Gose [Ghose], the farmer of gunge Murshedpore, commonly called *thana* Cutwa, complained that the Zemindar of Burdwan had lately erected a gunge within a distance of two or three *kosh* from his, and prayed that a perwannah might be sent to Maharaja Nubkissen desiring him to order the Zemindar to abolish his gunge. The Council, in the Revenue Department, resolved that the following answer might be written to the Committee of Revenue: "We desire you will issue a perwannah to the Sezawul of Burdwan, requiring him to abolish the gunge erected by the Rajah contiguous to that of Gunganarain Gose, the farmer of *thana* Cutwa. This order we have communicated to the Commissioner of Customs."

There is abundant testimony to the success of Nubkissen as the Sezawal of Burdwan. The following is one:—

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *November 27th*, 1781.

Letter from the Committee of Revenue giving "an account [of the] settlement of all the districts of Bengal and Behar" for April 1781 to April 1782 in Bengal, and September 1781 to September 1782 in Behar.

". . . . 8. Rajah Nobkissen had the charge of the collections of Burdwan when this Committee was established. The merit of his management in that capacity can only be estimated from facts. In the course of a few months he not only relieved the Zemindary from the incumbrance of an enormous debt, but discharged the revenues of Government with great punctuality. A very large portion of the surplus rents which enabled him to pay such considerable sums has been added to the public revenues as an increase this year, and he has been united in the management with the young Zemindar. He still preserves the office of Sezawul, but is at the same time responsible for

the amount of the engagements of the Zemindar. A comparison between his conduct and that of his predecessors in the management of the business will, we imagine, point out the propriety of this mode of settlement."

COUNCIL REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *December 18th*, 1781.

Letter from Committee of Revenue (November 26th, 1781).

"We have the honor to lay before you a representation which has been made to us by Rajah Nobkissen, the Sezawul of Burdwan, stating instances of the interference of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut in matters which we apprehend are not within the line of his jurisdiction."

"On the 3rd of September last we had occasion to address your Hon'ble Board on a similar representation from the Sezawul, and we hoped that the orders you then issued to the Judge of Adawlut would have prevented his making further claims to the superintendence of the lands appropriated to the maintenance of Tannahdars and Pykes in that Province, who, though they are immediately employed in collecting the revenues from the ryots and are in fact servants of the Zemindars are likewise subject to obey all orders of the Judge in phousdarry matters. As we are of opinion his jurisdiction extends no further over the Tannahdars and Pykes, we request you will please to repair to Burdwan within a limited and convenient time and account for the amount of the revenues paid to them, and may contain an assurance that they shall not be confined or ill-treated upon their appearance. If one or the other should appear according to the summons, you will call upon them to pay what is due from them, in which should they fail, we shall propose to the Hon'ble Board to comply with the request of the Rajah to invest Tillook Sing in the management of the district upon his making good the present engagements. We shall also propose to them to adopt the same alternative in case neither Chutter Sing or Jadoo Sing should appear agreeable to the summons. . . . . "

There is equally good testimony in regard to his work of a later date.

Agreed that the following answer be written to the Committee of Revenue :—

. . . . . "We approved your proceedings respecting the Etmaumdar of Buggry and of the measures you propose for the security of the revenues of that District.

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *January 29th*, 1782.

General account of collections of revenue, from Committee of Revenue. Mr. Shore's report on the balances of Aughun.

"*Burdwan.* The former of these districts is under the manage-
Dinagepore. ment of the Sejawul, Rajah Nobkissen, the latter under Rajah Deby Sing. Both these persons have been punctual in their payments through the whole course of the year, and there is no reason to apprehend any failure on their parts. Rajah Nobkissen is very forward in his payments for the month of Poos, and the payments of Dinagepore are completed for the same month."

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, *March 19th*, 1782.

Letter from Mr. Austin, dated February 4th, 1782.

"I have had the honour to receive your letter under date the 18th of December enclosing the copy of a representation which has been made to the Committee of Revenue by Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawul of Burdwan, charging me with interfering with the Tannahdars and Pykes by requiring the papers concerning them, and summoning and disgracing his brother in the eyes of all the farmers, in consequence of which your Hon'ble Board highly disapprove of the summons issued to him by me. In answer to these charges, I beg leave, in justification of my conduct as well as to expose the misrepresentations of the Sezawul, to inform you that, in pursuance of a letter from the Hon'ble the Governor-General under date 3rd of July, placing all the Tannahdars and Pykes employed in the foujdary jurisdiction under my charge, I thought it necessary to request a list of them from the Zemindar, that I might obey my orders in stationing them so as to protect the peace of the districts, and which I have been hitherto unable to obtain.

"I beg leave to assure you that I have never in any instance interfered in the appointment, payment, or dismission of the Tannahdars.

It is not possible to fix the date when Maharaja Nubkissen ceased to be Sezawul. There is evidence to show, however, that he declined to undertake the management for the Bengali year 1189, declaring the impossibility of realising the *jumma* [the assessed revenue] of the preceding year. The office of Sezawul was apparently the last public office that Nubkissen held. Henceforward his life appears to have been one of ease and dignity. He had given proofs of his capacity not only as a diplomat, but also as a statesman and an administrator, and he could afford to rest on his laurels. He gave himself to the discharge of social functions with an undistracted mind and soon came to prove himself a king in that sphere.

CHAPTER IX.

Maharaja Nubkissen in Society.

The social position of Maharaja Nubkissen was unique. It arose not from his wealth or his status and importance in public life. Position in Hindu society does not depend on wealth or official rank or intellectual eminence or public services. It depends on caste and on behaviour in social life. Caste does not mean in modern Indian life the pursuit of any particular trade or calling. It is an inheritance of ages. The four leading castes or divisions of society, Brahman, Kshetriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, are of ancient, indeed of immemorial origin. Sub-division of these classes, especially of the last, has brought into existence a multiplicity of castes in Bengal, and that is a step attributed to the Hindu king, Bullal Sen. The caste system, so far as it is a modern creation, is founded upon a distinction, not only of occupations, but of character and capacity, such as they existed in the days of its origin. The original division, that into the four castes, rests more clearly upon a distinction of moral temperament than upon a distinction of pursuits. Classification by calling is indeed recognised, is, in fact, apparent on the face of the division, but it arises out of and is dependent on the former principle, namely, that of classification by temperament and character. The castes constitute a hierarchy, and their dividing lines are rigidly fixed. The caste of an individual is the caste of his fathers. Whatever might have happened in ancient times, when Hindu kings reigned and *rishis* made and applied the law, it is certain that to-day no one can be transferred or can transfer himself from one caste to another. He can neither be promoted to a higher caste for his virtuous acts or qualities, nor degraded for his sins. The caste of a man is supposed to be a necessary consequence of his acts in a

previous existence ; and the life that he now lives, will, it is believed, determine his caste in his next birth. The penalty for un-Hindu behaviour is not degradation from one caste to another, but repudiation by society, that is, excommunication. A man who violates essential rules of religion or society will not be relegated to any inferior caste, but will be put out of society altogether as having ceased to be a Hindu. It is impossible to enumerate all the essential rules, all the restrictions of caste as they are sometimes called. One or two may be mentioned as illustrations. It is considered improper for the higher castes to dine with men of lower castes or to eat food cooked by them. The Brahman, in particular, has to observe special purity in this respect. Then, again, no marriage is permissible between one caste and another. As regards social practices, it is certain that the performance of the sacraments in a non-Hindu way, or the omission to perform some of them, will not be tolerated. Amongst the sacraments may be mentioned marriage, *Sraddha* (oblation to the dead), and, in the case of Brahmans, *Upanayana* (investiture with the sacred thread). The highest caste is that of the Brahmans, of whom, of course, as of the other castes, there are ranks and grades. The next in order is the *Kshetriya* caste, in which the *Kayasthas* are included.

Maharaja Nubkissen was a *Kayastha* by caste. The *Káyasthas* are divided, in point of rank, primarily into *Kulins* and *Mouliks*, the former being the higher ; and, in point of local distribution, into the *Uttara Rahri* class and the *Dakshina Rahri* class. The *Kulins* consist of only three families, classes or clans, namely, the Ghoses, the Boses, and the Mitters. Nubkissen was a *Moulik*, and a member of the *Dakshina Rahri Somaj*. He came, however, to be the head of the *Káyastha* community of Calcutta, that is, of the *Dakshin Rahri* section of it, and that is a fact worth explaining in view of the acknowledged ascendency of the *Kulins*. The fact of his leadership is not disputed. A writer, who

will not be suspected of blind admiration of Nubkissen and his family, has observed :—

Navakrishna's social importance was perhaps greater even than his political. All his other glories were outshone by the glory which attached to the chief of the Hindoo community of Calcutta. In the theatre of public affairs, he had many equals and a few superiors. Omichand, Whwaja Wajid, Runjeet Roy, Rajballab, and others we could name were scarcely behind him in diplomacy. Nundcoomar was a bolder and all along, except in his last fatal move, a successful intriguer. Mahomed Reza Khan had been Premier, and so had Nundcoomar in reality during the nominal administration of his son. But in the social kingdom of his city he was the very monarch. As he owed his fortune to his own enterprize, sagacity and genius, so his social pre-eminence was purely of his own acquiring.[1]

This is a frank acknowledgement of Nubkissen's social position, but the writer's explanation of it ignores facts and runs counter to reason. It is only a cynical sort of speculation.

"Where everybody is an upstart, an upstart head is no scandal. Navakrishna had no traditions to back him, but none else was better situated. On the other hand Navakrishna possessed one important advantage above others. He possessed substantive power in Hindoo society in Calcutta. He was the Judge of the Caste-tribunal. The post implied his being in the eyes of Government the most respectable. The official citizen-chief of the Hindoo community, he easily became its leader."

All founders of families, all architects of fortunes are upstarts. Nobility has always its origin in some individual. And in Hindu society the mere age of a family or its wealth or official distinction will not give it a leading position. Brahmins are leaders over *Kayásthas*, *Kulins* are leaders over *Mouliks*. It is not true that the *Kayastha* community of Calcutta consisted only of upstarts, and if it was so constituted, what then? It certainly included a number of the highest *Kulins;* and how came it that a *Moulik* came to be the head of a body so constituted? The official position as Judge of the Caste-tribunal or *Játimálá Cutcherry* will

[1] Mookerjee's Magazine.

explain nothing. As has been observed already more than once, social position in this country does not depend upon official rank. And the Judge of a caste-tribunal will no more become the social head of the Hindu community than an English Judge who has to decide mercantile cases will become the head of the mercantile community. The functions of the caste-cutcherry are thus described by Mr. Verelst :—

"All nations have their courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction distinct from the administration of civil justice, in some with a more limited, in others with more extensive authority. The followers of Brama in Bengal have their caste-cutcherries or courts to take cognisance of all matters relative to the several castes, or tribes of the Hindu religion. Their religious purity depends on the constant observance of such numberless precepts, that the authoriry of these courts enters into the concerns of common life, and is, consequently, very extensive. A degradation from the caste by their sentence is a species of excommunication attended with the most dreadful effects, rendering the offender an outcast from society. But as the weight of the punishment depends merely upon the opinion of the people, it is unnecessery to say that it cannot be inflicted by the English Governor (as Mr. Bolts asserts, p. 83) unless the mandate of a Governor could instantly change the religious sentiments of a nation. Neither can a man once degraded be restored, but by the general suffrage of his own tribe, the sanction of the Bramins (who are the head tribe) and the superadded concurrence of the Supreme Civil power." [1]

It is easy to see from this description that Maharaja Nubkissen's functions as President of the Caste-cutcherry were of a judicial character. His social position must have been the cause of his office, not the effect of it. The Caste-cutcherry, it may be presumed, was analogous to the Punchayet. Authority in such an office could not invest one with leadership, the explanation of which is to be sought in wholly other circumstances. The inquiry is worth pursuing if only to ascertain the calibre of Nubkissen's mind. In

[1]. "A View of.....The English Government in Bengal." London. 1772. Pp. 27, 28.

social life, as in political, he exhibited his thorough grasp of the situation, his insight into realities, he felt the necessity of evoking order out of chaos, of organising loose elements into a consistent whole, and he saw with unfailing certainty the means that were best adapted to the end. His method may be simply described: Not to fight against the laws of nature or society, not to attempt to stem the irresistible tide of events, but to watch and utilise the available forces that make for order, to reject effete and jarring elements, to waste no power, to submit to the inevitable, but with a single-minded aim to march with steady steps and slow,—that was his method. The Kulins were the natural leaders of the *Kayastha* community. Nubkissen did not work against them, but with them. He did not seek to bear them down by the weight of his wealth and official position or to snatch from them the authority which was rightfully theirs. But he put himself into co-operation with them. He invited and encouraged high-class *Kulins* to settle in the town ; he helped them with funds ; he showed them every respect ; he united his family with theirs by bonds of matrimony. They soon came to look upon him as a patron, as one of their nearest kith and kin. Through him also they came to feel a power they had never known before. They had never been organised for social purposes. He gave them an organisation and secured for them a general recognition of their status. With the aid of the *Ghataks* he had a compilation made, called the *Kulagrantha* (কুলগ্রন্থ) or a systmatic social record, of the *Kulins* in particular. The *Ghataks* are the men who keep registers of pedigrees, of marriages, of important social events, even of important incidents in the history of families, and they declare the social status of men. They are thus something more than heralds. They are no more chroniclers of pedigrees, but as they are authorities on some of the social practices, like marriage, and on the way in which families are affected by them, they come to be in effect the makers of the position of men. It is

for them to declare, for instance, the degeneration a family may have undergone by a marriage or some other social act. If they are mischievously inclined they can do mischief by raking up everything untoward in the antecedents of a man. If they are propitious they can render a service by bringing into prominence points of superiority. They had, as men, their weaknesses, especially as they had to depend for a living on private generosity. But it is unquestionable they rendered a very useful service to society. They maintained social discipline and kept men straight in the path of customary social practices. It will be an evil day for Hindu society when they shall have become extinct, for there will be none to register the social lapses of men or fix with definiteness the position of men in society. Nubkissen was a patron of the *Ghataks* and by the aid they gave in the compilation of the *Kulagrantha* they made him appear in the eyes of the *Kulins* as their benefactor. Nubkissen's position was improved by his known earnestness in religion, his intense piety as a Hindu. He lived according to Hindu rules, believed in the *Shastras* (religious and social works) and was zealous in securing a proper interpretation of them and their application to life. These circumstances tended to raise Nubkissen in the estimation of men, *Kulins* included, and marked him out as entitled to social leadership by his virtues and services to society. His office in the Caste-cutcherry had made him fully acquainted with social practices and the rules governing them. Added to that qualification there were his religious disposition, his knowledge of works on religion and life, his services to the *Kulins*, his union with them, his cheerful acceptance of their supremacy and of the authority of Brahmans as interpreters of social and religious duty. His crowning claim was the *Ekjái* (একজাই) he held.

This was a gathering of the caste people, to which Nubkissen invited *Kulins* of all ranks. The concourse was a grand one, especially as most of the *Kulins* were present

in person and not by *Ghataks*. They were received with fitting honours and paid the fees due to their rank and station (কুলমর্য্যাদা). Brahmans were present, *Ghataks* in particular. All social claims were considered, pedigrees examined, family history ransacked, and ultimately by universal consent Maharaja Nubkissen was recognised as the *Gosthipati* (গোষ্ঠীপতি) or head of the *Dakshin Rahri* section of the *Kayastha* community. It is said that even the former *Gosthipati* of the Singha family of Gopinagar recognised his leadership by a distinct act, by marrying, that is to say, a daughter of the family to his grandson Sir Raja Radha Kanta Deb, contrary to the rule observed by the *Gosthipati* of never marrying a daughter of the family to a *Moulik*. The recognition of Nubkissen as the head of the *Kayastha* community of Calcutta need cause no surprise. He had brought the community into existence. The scattered units, whatever their individual importance, had been welded into a society by him. He paid them due honour; he formed alliances with them; he maintained the purity of social practices and Hindu worship; he was in touch with the *Pundits* and the *Ghataks* and was their most munificent and illustrious patron. Before he was formally invested with the rights of a social leader, the responsibilities of leadership had fallen on him. Not only had he made large religious endowments, but his private charity and his gifts for public purposes were liberal and catholic. Religious and social ceremonies were celebrated by him on a grand scale, and the entertainments which accompanied them were for the benefit of rich and poor alike. Learning and religion had in him the most enthusiastic and liberal supporter, and society its most enlightened and illustrious representative. We hear a great deal to-day of "bridging the gulf" between the races. The idea had occurred to Nubkissen in those early days and he reduced it to practice. Many were the parties in his house to which he invited the *élite* of the European and the

Native community. He was at home in both communities, knew the ways of both, and was popular with both. He was as much loved and respected by the Mahomedan community as by his own. He was the first "interpreter" of British rule and rulers to the people. In every way he had become the uncrowned king of Hindu society before the consent of the *Kulins* and the declaration of the *Ghataks* formally conferred on him the sovereignty.

All the works of Maharaja Nubkissen's charity cannot now be traced. But it is well known that he constructed a road thirty-two miles long from Behala to Kulpi, on the north of Calcutta. He excavated several tanks in different parts of his zemindaries and made many improvements in them. In Ganga Mandal he excavated a large canal more than twelve miles long. He erected two bathing *ghats* on the banks of the Ganges and constructed a house for the free accommodation of those who long to die on the banks of that sacred river, and are taken there in their last moments. His charity was not confined within the limits of his religion or race. In December 1783 he "presented, in addition to the old Burying Ground, six bigahs and ten biswaes of the adjoining land in Mowzah Dhee Calcutta. This was the spot on which the old magazine stood, and which, with the old Burying Ground, forms the present cemetery of St. John's. The ground given by [Maha] Raja Nobkissen was then valued at above 30,000 Rupees."[1]

There is the authority of Warren Hastings for the statement that Nubkissen gave him the sum of Rs. 3,00,000 for the establishment of a Madrassa for the encouragement of learning in Persian and Arabic.

This is cosmopolitan charity. And it was inspired by the true spirit of charity and not by any motives of personal

[1] Sketches of Bengal since the Foundation of Calcutta. Calcutta: 1818.

RESIDENCE OF MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.—NORTH RANGE.

advantage. The charity of our times is very often a species of investment, a bid for titles or some other sort of recognition by Government. If roads are constructed, tanks and canals excavated, or colleges endowed, the inspirer of those works of beneficence is generally the Government in its concrete manifestation as a District Magistrate. Charity that springs from either sympathy or a sense of duty has become almost extinct. A people constitutionally charitable, charitable by instinct, by tradition, by the impulses of religion and the standards of society, has somehow or other come to be demoralised, and in most cases it is either a dread of official penalties or a hope of official rewards that is the spur to munificence. The meanest of gifts must be advertised or the donor will not be satisfied. In Nubkissen's time the demoralisation had not begun; the Hindu conscience had not been deadened, and Nubkissen mixed with the greatest of Englishmen as a friend. His charity sprang from the heart.

As might be expected, Nubkissen's expenses on religious ceremonies were on a princely scale. The Durga Puja was celebrated in a style which made it a public rather than a private ceremony. It was for the whole town. And the genuinely religious character of the performance was not lost in mere grandeur, in a display of the vanities of the world. So attentive was the Maharaja to worship in proper form and so apprehensive was he that the priests might be ignorant or careless, that he had the whole ritual carefully compiled by competent men, with translations in Bengalee of the *mantras*. He performed his own part in the ceremonies with scrupulous accuracy, submitting to privations and going through the forms with perfect cheerfulness. And the Durga Puja was only one of several Pujas celebrated by him. Every one of them was performed with *eclat*, in complete conformity to the directions of the authoritative religious books, and with a due regard to the expectations and demands of Hindu society.

On a visit to the shrine at Kalighat in Calcutta he expended not less than one hundred thousand rupees on the worship of the Goddess. Amongst the offerings were a gold necklace valued at Rs. 10,000, and besides other ornaments, a rich bed, silver plates, dishes and *básons*, sweetmeats and other food sufficient for the entertainment of a thousand persons, and trifling presents of money to near two thousand of the poor.[1] He endowed the temple of Radha Ballabha at Ballabhpore, about 12 miles north of Calcutta, with lands, houses, &c., to the annual amount of Rs. 3,000 which is divided among sixteen families of Brahmans.[2] Religion was with him not a thing of show, not a fitful gleam, not a periodical performance dependent upon regulation, but the ruling principle of his heart. A good and devout Hindu, he never omitted the daily religious ceremonies, and it was not simply in the peace of his quiet home, but in the busiest moments of his eventful life, when his mind was agitated by issues of grave public moment, religion was the abiding sentiment and impulse. It was the ever burning flame. It will be remembered he went to the North-West and was employed—he was the only native so employed—in the several negotiations with the Emperor Shah Alum, the Vizier of Oudh, the Maharaja of Benares and others when the grant of the Dewanny was made to the East India Company. It was at such a time that Nubkissen visited temples at Benares, performed ceremonies, made offerings and presents. Benares is one of the chief shrines in India, one of the oldest and holiest cities. To die in Benares is one of the aspirations of the pious Hindu. To live there in retirement is the highest bliss on earth. To make some endowment for worship, to repair or adorn a temple, to establish a charity in that sacred city, is one of the best uses of wealth. The temple of Bishweshwar in Benares is the holy of holies, and

[1] Ward's History of the Hindoos. Vol I., pp. 160-161.

[2] *Id*, Vol. II., p. 9.

Nubkissen longed to do good to his soul by the establishment, in his own name, of a special worship of *Siva* in witness of his faith. Much was the jealousy excited by his proposal. But Nubkissen's ardour and faith, and, it may be added, his tact and humility, conquered all opposition. The gods were propitious to the good Hindu. The Hindu public and the *Pándás* (ministers of worship) came to support his idea; and under the auspices of the then almost independent Maharaja of Benares, was established within the temple a symbol of *Siva* under the name of Sri Sri Navakrishneshwar. This was an unprecedented act, and it has not been allowed to form a precedent itself. The Maharaja spent a large sum on the occasion and made an endowment for the permanent *Sheba* or service of the idol he had established. Great was the sensation in Benares and among almost the entire Hindu population, for the act was unique. To this day the *Puja* of Sri Sri Navakrishneshwar is regularly performed every day within the temple of Sri Sri Bishweshwarji. The Maharaja's piety turned his political visit into a pilgrimage. The circumstances under which he established the family idol Sri Sri Gopinathji are worthy of record. It is said that on the occasion of his mother's *sradh* he spent a large sum of money in bringing established idols (বিগ্রহ) which were best known and most largely worshipped. From Agradwipa within the possessions of Maharaja Krishna Chundra of Nuddea he brought the idol (বিগ্রহ) Sri Sri Gopinathji. He returned the other idols after the ceremony, and endowed their shrines with lands, &c., but retained the last. The family tradition is that Maharaja Nubkissen dreamt a dream which determined him to keep the idol in his family at any cost. He was prepared to give up for the sake of this idol a sum of three lakhs of rupees which he had lent to Maharaja Krishna Chundra. A friendly dispute developed into a regular quarrel and Maharaja Krishna Chundra brought a suit in a court of law for the restoration of the idol,

Nubkissen was not to be baffled however. He had an image made exactly resembling the idol from Agradwipa ; he sent this copy and retained the original. Such a substitution would be unpardonable if it was a piece of furniture or any other article of property that was in dispute. But in retaining the original idol he felt that he was obeying a divine command communicated to him in a dream, that the spirit that was represented by the idol had elected to be with him, and he would be offending God and conscience by a literal submission to the legal rights of Maharaja Krishna Chundra. The fact is noticed in Ward's *History of the Hindoos* in the following way[1]:—

"Raja Nabakrishna of Calcutta once seized this image (Gopee Nath of Agradwipa) for a debt of three lakhs of rupees, due to him from the owner Raja Krishna Chandra Rai (of Krishnagore). The latter afterwards regained the image by a suit at law; but not till Nabakrishna had made another Gopee Nath exactly like it."

It is no great certificate to such a man to say of him that he was kind and generous to his relations. He erected for them *pucca* [brick-built] buildings; he awarded them maintenance. In his native village, Punchagram, he gave lands extending about three miles, to his distant kinsmen, free of rent for their habitation and other uses. He was invariably kind to his dependents, and courteous, generous and even reverential to his poor kinsfolk. He looked up to his elder brother with the respect due to a father. To his *guru* (spiritual preceptor) and his *purohit* (priest) he gave lands free of rent.

Popular tradition credits Maharaja Nubkissen with having spent nine lakhs of rupees on his mother's *Sraddha.* According to another account, however, "Gunga Govinda Singh, a person of the writer caste, head servant to Mr. Hastings, expended, it is said, 1,200,000 rupees at his mother's

[1] Vol I. pp. 205-206. See also *The Calcutta Review.* Vol. VI. 1846, Article : "The Banks of the Bhagirathi."

Shraddha; and Raja Nobokissen of Calcutta nearly as much in the *Shraddha* for his mother. His expense was principally incurred in presents to the Brahmins, such as bedsteads, at two or three hundred rupees each ; waterpitchers of silver and gold, some worth a thousand, and others two thousand rupees, dishes of silver and gold at five hundred, two hundred and one hundred ; silver and gold cups and lamp-steads, at two hundred, one hundred, &c.; covered bowls for betel-nuts, and gold and silver waterjugs at from five hundred down to one hundred, and cloths at ten or fifteen rupees a piece."[1]

It is impossible to know with definiteness the expenditure of a private person on a private ceremony unless he chooses to declare it or to place adequate materials before the public. The different estimates that have been made of Nubkissen's expenditure on his mother's *Sraddha* are all in the nature of reckless speculation. The only thing which is definitely known is that the celebration was on an imperial scale. For the distribution of alms and entertainment of guests the districts were divided into a number of thanas with superintendents placed over them. They were called Darogas and were provided with stores and funds. The almsgiving and the entertainments continued for a number of days and passed off to the satisfaction of all. Men on all sides were heard to say: "This is more than a *Sraddha* ceremony, it is like the *Marut Yajna* of the *Kali Yuga*." *Marut Yajna* was the sacrifice which had been celebrated in the *Satya Yuga* by the class of Vedic gods called *Maruts*, on which as a prototype the *Raj-Suya Yajna* of king *Yudhisthira* was solemnised in the next age, the *Dwapara Yuga*. The following is a good account of the popular reminiscences of the celebration as they have come filtered down to the present generation :—

"There were full thirty days between the death and the *Sradh* day, and Navakrishna's countrymen made good this advantage. At first

[1] Ward's *History of Hindoos*. Vol II., p. 145.

the professional beggars, Bhats and Pariahs, undertook the journey. Next those whose condition oscillated between decency and beggary, who hitherto wavered between going and not going, decided in the affirmative. Lastly men even in competent circumstances, tempted by large expectations, and urged by greedy wives, coupled with the small chance of being distinguished in the crowd, followed. Those who had to come from great distances, necessarily carried their homes about with them like the Bedouins. As presents are given per head, the very babies were brought, and when many of them died of suffocation, their parents preserved them for the occasion and exhibiting them as if they were alive, added to their income,—the distributors of the presents, bewildered with the crowd and attacked by the army of beggars, each demanding and endeavouring to wring his share out before the others, had not the time nor the wits left to examine the recipients, and even dolls immersed in a heap of rags were passed upon them for infants. It was as it were an exodus of the moffusil to the metropolis. The very bazars of the zillahs, rendered unnecessary for the time by the depopulation in the villages, were transplanted into Calcutta and the Suburban Districts.

"All the Pundits of Bengal and many even of Benares were invited, and came. Navakrishna with all his wealth could ill afford accommodation for this host. But in all cases where he failed, the Hindoo inhabitants of the city and of the surrounding villages opened their hospitable doors. The beggars slept in the fields, under trees and on the roadside. The dietetic resources and the confectioneering skill of the whole country were invoked to feed the motley mass of humanity. The entire pottery of the country was exhausted. All the plantain trees of the land were laid under contribution for plates for the eatables. The confectioners had begun their labours the day following 'the last of danger and distress,' and the result in time well indicated that a nation was to be fed for days. Piles of spices, the produce of all the betel-topes of Bengal disposed of in heaps, pottery that rivalled Babel, Himalayas of brass vessels and Alps of gold and silver things, all the shawls and broadcloth and other cloth of Burra-Bazar, vast pyramids of sweetmeats and lakes of liquid sweets, kheer, dohee and milk, wore an imposing aspect. Everything bespoke barbaric profusion. The arrangements were as perfect as human foresight and wisdom could make, but the contest was unequal. A nation besieging Navakrishna was too much for him, even though the military were called to his assistance. Navakrishna, with the soldiers trying to preserve order among that swarm of locusts, was like Dame

Partington with her mop repelling the Atlantic. The presents to the Great Uninvited were unequally distributed. Some who had travelled a fortnight or twenty days received nothing at all; others who were plundered of all they possessed to boot heavily retraced their steps homewards, or, for want of the wherewithal to do so, settled near Calcutta; while the presents and plunders reaped by a third number amounted to the annual income of many a big keranee. Rather better fared the invited Pundits and relations of Navakrishna. But the Amlah literally made fortunes. A fabulous sum was spent in this Sradh. Popular estimation reckons that sum at nine lacs of rupees."[1]

This was of course a unique celebration in the history not only of Nubkissen but of the country. But the festive gatherings held in his house on ordinary occasions were many and varied. Apart from the Puja entertainments, parties were especially held for bringing together representatives of the European and Native communities. Those held in commemoration of the battle of Plassey were generally honoured by the presence of Clive so long as he was here, of the Governor-General of the time, of members of Council and of other leading Englishmen, official and non-official. That Nubkissen was in touch with the English community and mixed on familiar terms with it, appears from an account in *Hickey's Bengal Gazette*, of a party held in his house in celebration of the birthday of a Miss Wrangham. Mr. H. E. Busteed in his *Echoes from old Calcutta* devotes a chapter to that journal which he calls the 'first Indian Newspaper.' Miss Emma Wrangham was, according to this writer, probably sister of one John Wrangham who entered the Indian Civil Service, Madras, in 1783. She was the "social star" "who came in for the most prominent notice from the contributors to Hickey's paper." Mr. Livius, who is mentioned in the report of the entertainment, was a *protégé* of Francis who had got him made Military storekeeper. The *Gazette* had an existence of only about three years, and

[1] *Mookerjee's Magazine*, April 1861, pp. 166—169.

its editor and itself had an unfortunate fate. The report runs:—

From Hickey's Bengal Gazette, from Saturday, August 18th, to Saturday, August 25th, 1781.

On Monday night Rajah Nobkissen gave a nautch and magnificent entertainment to several persons of distinction in commemoration of Miss Wrangham's birthday. As the ladies arrived, they were conducted by the Rajah through a grand suite of apartments into the Zenana, where they were amused until the singing began, which was so mellifluous as to give every face a smile of approbation. The surprising agility of one of the male dancers occasioned loud acclamations of applause. The principal female singers called the nymphs and swains to celebrate the festivity of the day and spoke a few complimentary lines suitable to the occasion. After supper there was a ball, which was opened by Mr. Livius and Miss Wrangham, who were dressed in the characters of Apollo and Daphne. When the minuets were ended, country dances struck up and continued till past three in the morning, when the company departed highly pleased with the elegant festival. And when the Rajah was attending Miss Wrangham to her carriage, he thanked her in very polite terms for having illuminated his house with her bright appearance.

Maharaja Nubkissen was the Maecenas of Bengal. There never was in this province a more munificent or more enthusiastic patron of letters and the fine arts. His home was the favourite resort of men of learning. His *Sabha* (Association) of Pundits was pre-eminently the first in the land. It has been popularly compared to the famous Council of Vikramaditya. It included men like Jagannatha Tarkapanchanan, Vanessur Vidyalankar, Radhakanta Tarhabagish, Sreekantha, Kamalakanta, Balaram and Shankar. The pundits of his Sabha more than once saved the honour of Bengal by the triumph they achieved in disputations with champion pundits from north and south. A pundit of those times, named Ramnath Tarkasiddhanta, was distinguished as much for his learning as for his cynical pride and independence of character. It is said of him that when Raja Ishwara Chandra of Nuddea paid a visit to him in his humble dwelling, he spoke to that nobleman, in response to a kind enquiry about the pundit's

wants, with the lofty dignity and stubborn pride of Diogenes answering Alexander. But this same pundit, hewn from the block out of which the best of Greeks were made, accepted an invitation of Nubkissen's and entered into an intellectual combat with a southern pundit whom he easily laid prostrate. He declined, however, everything in the nature of a present that Nubkissen offered to him.

The Maharaja gave large and frequent presents to learned pundits. To Pundit Jagannath Tarkapanchanan he gave a taluk yielding a decent income and also the cost of erecting his house. The Maharaja had made to the pundit a very rich offer, namely, of a zemindary yielding a lakh of rupees a year, but the pundit declined it on the ground that riches were demoralising and his descendants, if they were wealthy, would not care for learning and would give themselves up to luxury. A smaller gift he accepted. It was through the Maharaja's influence that he was appointed by Government as the Court Pundit and Compiler of Hindu Law. He gave to Pundit Radhakanta Tarkabagish 1,200 bighas of revenue-free land and obtained for him the title of Pundit Pradhan from the Emperor of Delhi. He built for Pundit Vaneshwar Vidyalankar a house in Sobha-Bazar. Learned moulvies also received handsome encouragement from him. He was himself a great Persian scholar and was well versed in the history and literature of the Mussulmans. In his own family he encouraged the reading of English and Persian. His collection of books and manuscripts, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, was large and valuable. It included many rare and original works, and the Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts in particular appear to have been compiled at great cost and with the most laborious and discriminative research. They bear evidence of the universality of his tastes and of his general appreciation of learning. No private person's library in this country could be compared to Nubkissen's in respect of the value of ancient

manuscripts. His appreciation of the fine arts, of music in particular, was in every way worthy of himself. Haru Thakur and Nitai Dass, well known as composers of songs, were his *protégés*; and he introduced into Calcutta society and popularised the nautch which Englishmen believe to be the chief of our public amusements. It is *Bai Nautch*. The songs of *Kabis* (কবি) were a favourite entertainment of Hindoo society. They were a curious illustration of the blended powers of metrical composition and of controversy. Songs composed by one person or party and sung before an assembly were then and there answered by another. The answer brought a reply and so the song-duel went on till one side was fairly exploded. The full name of Haru Thakur was Hurray Kristo Dirghangi. He was called a Thakur because he was a Brahmin among *kabis*. It was in Nubkissen's house that this species of entertainment had its origin, its first exhibition. Haru Thakur was so attached to Nubkissen, that after the Maharaja's death he gave up his profession. Of another kind of musical entertainment known as *Akhrái*, the Maharaja was a distinguished, probably the first patron. Kului Chandra Sen, who was not only competent in *Akhrai*, but probably its founder, received great encouragement. A cousin of Kului,—Ram Nidhi Gupta,—popularly known as Nidhoo Babu, made great improvements in the art. Distinguished musicians—singers and players on instruments—came to him, attracted by his fame as a votary of the Muses, and none went disappointed. All had their due appreciation and reward. The writer who has been already quoted more than once thus delivers himself on Nubkissen's encouragement of letters :—

"Navakrishna's abilities, Persian scholarship, public spirit and liberality rendered him greatly respected in the English community. His vices were the vices of the age, of both Natives and Europeans, of whatever rank; but none of his contemporaries, except Clive, approached him in the better parts of his nature . . . . . Nundcoomar, a better Persian scholar than Navakrishna, at the height of

his power merely lived in royal state. The name of Gunga Gobind Singh is preserved in tradition by a single act of magnificent expenditure; and of Canto Baboo, a boor, by only his unexpected good fortune. Navakrishna, on the contrary, was an able official, an accomplished gentleman and a munificent nobleman. A warm patron of letters, his palace was the centre of association of all the learned of the surrounding districts, and the resort of those of distant parts of India who chanced to come to Calcutta. In accordance with a hoary-headed but most unexceptionable custom of this country, great men are attended by a number of pundits who give them the benefit of their opinion on all occasions and often discuss logical and metaphysical topics before them. Navakrishna's council of the learned was splendid, as the names of two of its distinguished ornaments, Jagannath Tarkapanchanana and Vaneswar Vidyalankara, will indicate, and discussions in it were always encouraged by large presents to the wranglers. His wealth and influence procured him many rare Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts. Nor did music receive from him a less hearty welcome. Whoever, player on instrument or songster, came from Delhi, Gwalior, Lucknow, Benares or other seats of the art, as far down as Moorshedabad, was sure to be attracted by the fame of Raja Navakrishna's fostering care of whatever was good or beautiful. The letters of retired civilians to him from home show the great confidence they reposed in him. Most young civilians desirous of attaining a knowledge of the Persian tongue were referred by their elders to him . . . . The couple of dwelling houses he has left to his descendants are living monuments of the grandeur of his taste. They are, in Oriental estimation, perhaps the only two specimens of palatial buildings in a city styled the City of Palaces; and the nautch-room in one of them is the best in Calcutta."

As the pundits have been so often referred to, it may be necessary to say a few words in regard to their character, functions and place in society. The pundits are Brahmins learned in the lore treasured up in Sanskrit works. They are, most of them *adhyapaks* or teachers. The institutions in which they impart learning are called *tols* in the vernacular of Bengal. They take no fees from pupils, but, on the contrary, offer them free board and lodging. They are maintained by gifts from the community, or, rather, from the higher castes thereof. In the days of Hindu kings they could count on being

manuscripts. His appreciation of the fine arts, of music in particular, was in every way worthy of himself. Haru Thakur and Nitai Dass, well known as composers of songs, were his *protégés;* and he introduced into Calcutta society and popularised the nautch which Englishmen believe to be the chief of our public amusements. It is *Bai Nautch.* The songs of *Kabis* (কবি) were a favourite entertainment of Hindoo society. They were a curious illustration of the blended powers of metrical composition and of controversy. Songs composed by one person or party and sung before an assembly were then and there answered by another. The answer brought a reply and so the song-duel went on till one side was fairly exploded. The full name of Haru Thakur was Hurray Kristo Dirghangi. He was called a Thakur because he was a Brahmin among *kabis.* It was in Nubkissen's house that this species of entertainment had its origin, its first exhibition. Haru Thakur was so attached to Nubkissen, that after the Maharaja's death he gave up his profession. Of another kind of musical entertainment known as *Akhrái,* the Maharaja was a distinguished, probably the first patron. Kului Chandra Sen, who was not only competent in *Akhrai,* but probably its founder, received great encouragement. A cousin of Kului,—Ram Nidhi Gupta,—popularly known as Nidhoo Babu, made great improvements in the art. Distinguished musicians—singers and players on instruments—came to him, attracted by his fame as a votary of the Muses, and none went disappointed. All had their due appreciation and reward. The writer who has been already quoted more than once thus delivers himself on Nubkissen's encouragement of letters :—

"Navakrishna's abilities, Persian scholarship, public spirit and liberality rendered him greatly respected in the English community. His vices were the vices of the age, of both Natives and Europeans, of whatever rank; but none of his contemporaries, except Clive, approached him in the better parts of his nature . . . . . Nundcoomar, a better Persian scholar than Navakrishna, at the height of

his power merely lived in royal state. The name of Gunga Gobind Singh is preserved in tradition by a single act of magnificent expenditure; and of Canto Baboo, a boor, by only his unexpected good fortune. Navakrishna, on the contrary, was an able official, an accomplished gentleman and a munificent nobleman. A warm patron of letters, his palace was the centre of association of all the learned of the surrounding districts, and the resort of those of distant parts of India who chanced to come to Calcutta. In accordance with a hoary-headed but most unexceptionable custom of this country, great men are attended by a number of pundits who give them the benefit of their opinion on all occasions and often discuss logical and metaphysical topics before them. Navakrishna's council of the learned was splendid, as the names of two of its distinguished ornaments, Jagannath Tarkapanchanana and Vaneswar Vidyalankara, will indicate, and discussions in it were always encouraged by large presents to the wranglers. His wealth and influence procured him many rare Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts. Nor did music receive from him a less hearty welcome. Whoever, player on instrument or songster, came from Delhi, Gwalior, Lucknow, Benares or other seats of the art, as far down as Moorshedabad, was sure to be attracted by the fame of Raja Navakrishna's fostering care of whatever was good or beautiful. The letters of retired civilians to him from home show the great confidence they reposed in him. Most young civilians desirous of attaining a knowledge of the Persian tongue were referred by their elders to him . . . . The couple of dwelling houses he has left to his descendants are living monuments of the grandeur of his taste. They are, in Oriental estimation, perhaps the only two specimens of palatial buildings in a city styled the City of Palaces; and the nautch-room in one of them is the best in Calcutta."

As the pundits have been so often referred to, it may be necessary to say a few words in regard to their character, functions and place in society. The pundits are Brahmins learned in the lore treasured up in Sanskrit works. They are, most of them *adhyapaks* or teachers. The institutions in which they impart learning are called *tols* in the vernacular of Bengal. They take no fees from pupils, but, on the contrary, offer them free board and lodging. They are maintained by gifts from the community, or, rather, from the higher castes thereof. In the days of Hindu kings they could count on being

maintained by the king also. Though their work of teaching is wholly honorary, wholly a self-assumed labour of love, they may be in a certain sense called professional teachers. They have no other occupation than learning and teaching. They have no other ambition. If ever the ideal of plain living and high thinking has been realised it is in their case. They form a class or community by themselves. Very often pundits enter into family connections with pundits alone, and the succeeding generation has pundits for ancestors, both on the father's and the mother's side. The world has not seen another class like them. Plato and Aristotle, Abelard, Averroes and Avicenna, Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, Usher and Selden, Grotius, Puffendorf and Erasmus, Bopp and Bentley have been great as scholars, as devotees of learning, but which of their ancestors and descendants have lived the same life as they? The race of scholars is kept up in other parts of the world, not by a succession of them in the same families, but by fresh recruits from families never previously distinguished for learning. In India fresh recruits are not of course excluded, but many are the families that have furnished pundits for generations extending over centuries. There has been, so to say, a caste of pundits, and a caste that has justified its existence not by a mere name but the successful pursuit of its own special calling. And the wonder is that the calling which has secured such steady votaries is so little remunerative. Next to the *Sanyasis* and *Sadhus* the pundits are the most notable class in India. Ancient works have not till recently existed in the form of published books, and they are written in a style so condensed and elliptical as to be scarcely intelligible without the aid of well instructed or rather duly initiated teachers. Hence the value of oral teaching in India, and the works would have been of little value as instruments of education if the class of pundits had disappeared or collapsed. The intellectual development of the country came to be arrested under Mahomedan rule, but

there was one class that in the midst of poverty and persecution contrived through the dark centuries to keep burning a modest flame of ancient Aryan knowledge. It was the pundits. Progress was out of the question. But these pundits rendered the only service that was possible, the saving from utter extinction the learning of ancient India. A fragment of it only remains, and for that we are indebted to the pundits. It is not merely that they have preserved the works, but they have kept up the cultivation of the subjects by the reading and interpretation of the works and the teaching of them to their sons and pupils. Owing to various reasons, however, they are now an ill-nourished, declining class.

Several of the pundits, especially those who cultivate the *Smritis*, or the books dealing with law and custom, are recognised as authorities on social practice and as the authoritative interpreters of those books. Society changes, and law and custom must change with it. The *Rishis*, who in ancient times had the power to make and declare the law and custom, had also the power to change them. After the era of the *Rishis*, Hindu kings entrusted to the most learned pundits (*áchárjyas*) or to associations of them the task of interpreting the law and custom as they existed in books or in practice, and of compiling codes of them from time to time. The Hindu *régime* has now passed away. In the early days of British rule, judges in administering Hindu law took the opinions or *vyavasthas* of competent pundits; and those opinions are still recognised as good law. Judicial administration has now become independent of the opinions of pundits. In matters of religious or social usage, however, no authority exists for interpretation except the pundits. They cannot very well be vested with official authority, for Government is pledged to a policy of non-interference in social and religious matters. Society, however, by a tacit and universal consent recognises that authority as existing in the pundits. It is obvious that the authority must exist somewhere, for

neither on the one hand can essential social practices, bound up with religion, be left to be determined by the caprice of individual opinion, nor on the other can an old, unchanging code be left to govern absolutely an ever-changing society. Expansion or modification of the law is possible only by legislation or by interpretation. We have no Hindu legislature now, and recourse is possible only to interpretation. The laws of ancient Rome were interpreted by judges and jurisconsults; the common law of England is made up of judicial decisions, of custom, long-standing and prevalent, and of the opinions of great commentators, like Granville, Bracton or Britton; ecclesiastical law and practice are interpreted by courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and reason, tradition, analogy and expediency would alike suggest that in the present social and political condition of India, the interpreters, the adapters, the improvers of the social law and custom of the Hindus—always more or less mixed up with religion—are the pundits versed in the learning of those subjects. There is no other class competent for the purpose, nor can the task of authoritative interpretation be avoided. Hindu social questions do not mean questions of dress and fashion, but questions which affect the very framework of society, its existence or its integrity.

Maharaja Nubkissen, not so much with the prudence of a social philosopher as with the instincts of a Hindu, patronised the pundits and submitted to their patronage. If there are any social legislators to-day amongst the Hindus it is the pundits. And as Nubkissen was the patron of his illustrious *Sabha* of Pundits, people felt that he was their rightful head. His relations to the pundits were exactly analogous to those of a *Kshetriya* king of old times and his council of social legislators, relations at once of supremacy and subordination, of political supremacy and social subordination. From this among other things arose the social ascendency of Nubkissen. If the *Kayasthas* of Bengal have a

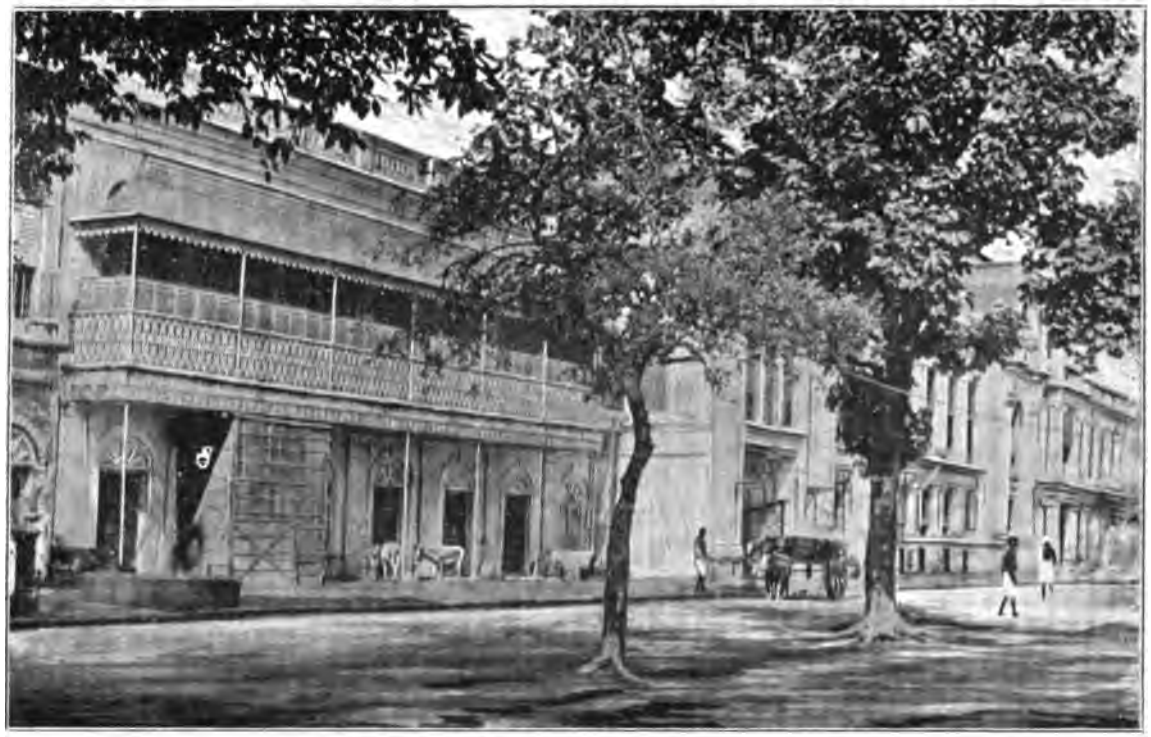
higher social position, a more clearly recognised status than that of the *Kayasthas* of any other part of India, it is because Nubkissen gave them strength and coherence in Calcutta, which soon came to be imparted to the same community in the mofussil, that is, the interior of the province. Calcutta, which in those days was a city of mere traders and shopkeepers, came under the influence of Nubkissen's magic, social wand to be the home and nursery of a powerful, well organised *Kayastha* community. Whatever of dignity or social power it has now, is traceable to the impulse that he communicated to it. Even now Calcutta is the only place in Bengal where organised social divisions (দল) exist, having recognised leaders (দলপতি). Nubkissen's division was the largest and most influential. And it is worthy of note, as a proof at once of Nubkissen's position and popularity, that even Brahmins cheerfully ranged themselves under his banners in his division. To this day many a Brahmin acknowledges membership of that division. And time has not wrested from the hands of Nubkissen's descendants the social sceptre that he wielded. Their leadership is universally acknowledged. They receive like him their marks of honour—the wreath round their necks and the sandalwood paste on their foreheads—in the true order of precedence. They will undoubtedly retain that position if they have the suavity and humility of Nubkissen, his ardent religious temperament, his readiness to bear the social burdens, his sympathy with society, his submission to the *shastras*, his respect for the Brahmans, pundits in particular, and for the *Kulin Kayasthas*. And the same is true of Hindu Society in general. Its existence will depend upon its coherence, its submission to discipline, its recognition of leaders, its respect for tradition.

CHAPTER X.

Notes and Queries.

The style in which Nubkissen celebrated his mother's *sraddha* was much discussed at the time. The question, whence did he get so much money, exercised men's minds at least as much then as it does now. His contemporaries, who were staggered by the display, began to speculate, and several of them in their speculations treated him with little charity. It was reported to Mr. Verelst by some influential men that the Maharaja, having spent all his money on the celebration of his mother's funeral rites, distributed in alms many lakhs of rupees belonging to the Hon'ble Company's Treasury in his charge. After the completion of the *sraddha*, when the Maharaja went to visit Mr. Verelst he told him in jest: "I am informed that you lost your sense and expended the whole of your wealth, as well as several lakhs of rupees belonging to the Company's Treasury, in the performance of your mother's obsequies." Nubkissen, as soon as he heard this, locked up the Treasury (then called the Money Godown) and left the key on the table of Mr. Verelst, soliciting him to remove his doubts by sending for the person who had accused him and for one of the members of the Council, and desiring them to examine and receive the cash in balance at the Treasury. Mr. Verelst sought to pacify him, spoke to him in the gentlest manner, and assured him of his unshaken confidence. The Governor said he had no doubt the cash was all right in the Treasury. The Maharaja, however, remained inflexible. He said his honour had been assailed, and he begged and insisted that, for his own sake, as well as the Governor's, the cash in the Treasury might be examined. Mr. Verelst yielded. He sent a member

of the Council to the Treasury, who examined the cash and found a surplus of seven lakhs of rupees belonging to the Maharaja. Mr. Verelst on receiving the information offered apologies, and pressed the Maharaja to take back the key. The Maharaja thanked him for his kindness and for the confidence reposed in him, but refused to take back the key. If he had been slandered once he might be slandered again, and he did not think it proper to retain any longer any public office. He resigned all the high and important posts he held under the Company and removed to the house of the Governor the offices which had so long been held in his own. Thus perished a scandal of the times. A positive and definite charge of misappropriation had been made against the Maharaja, and he found it easy to disprove it. A charge of a vague, hypothetical character is not easily refuted. That Nubkissen had made his fortune by looting the inner treasury of the Nawab is a charge which cannot, in the very nature of things, be demonstrated to be false, for such a demonstration would mean the proof of a negative and would be impossible by a simple experimental process like examination of cash in a Treasury. In judging of the honesty of a man what are the canons to be followed? Must we call upon him to account for every pice he made, and, in default, pass judgment against him? If such a trial was to be held, few would come unscathed out of it. No man publishes his account books, and the speculations of others about his gains and savings are generally worthless. The rational principle of judgment would seem to be not to hold a man dishonest till something could be proved against him. And taking the world as we find it, it is not always possible to draw the line which divides honesty from its opposite. It is not easy to say how much of the gains even of a lawyer or a doctor is honest, and how much is not. The world's standards are not the moralist's. All rising to great fortune, like "all rising to great place," "is by a



RESIDENCE OF MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.—SOUTH RANGE.

winding stair," and nothing can be more inconsistent than to worship worldly success and yet to be fastidious about the means of attaining it. Nubkissen had, in addition to his salaries, at least as many undefined and elastic sources of income as a lawyer. And if he left property worth only about a crore of rupees, there is no use racking the imagination to discover possible sources of that wealth. Lawyers, doctors and tradesmen, even in this poor country, and in these days of exhaustion, have accustomed us to that figure.

The story of the substitution of one idol for another, as given in the last chapter, upon the authority of Ward and some other writers, does not seem to be accurate in all its details. It is extremely unlikely that Raja Krishna Chundra would have been satisfied with an image which was professedly and notoriously a copy and not the original. A Hindu values the idol he worships not as so much property. Where it is made of a precious metal and is artistically constructed, it has of course a money value. But it has also a higher value not expressible in terms of money of any denomination. It is a spiritual treasure, the sacred abode of the Divine Spirit. It is possible Nubkissen gave the substitute and not the original, but Krishna Chundra could hardly have consented to take an idol that he knew to be a substitute. If he was ready to accept a substitute he would be equally content to take its material value in money or bullion, and that can hardly be believed. It is consecration that gives its specific value to an idol. If the general public were aware of the substitution made—and the historical character of the accounts seems to show that they were—then the Raja must also have been aware of it. And as the Raja's knowledge is extremely improbable, the historical accounts themselves should be received *cum grano*. What appears most likely is that Nubkissen had a copy of the idol made and offered both the original and the copy to Krishna Chundra to make his choice out of; and the latter, depending

wholly upon chance, chose, unfortunately for himself, the wrong idol. There have been similar instances of choice or mischoice in analogous cases, and that seems to be the practice generally followed in that class of cases. There is a reason for it. It has an aspect of fairness about it, and it is believed that the Divinity that is immanent in the idol really rules the choice. In the present case, for instance, the fact of Raja Krishna Chundra making a wrong choice would be regarded by Hindus as a proof that Gopinath elected to reside with Maharaja Nubkissen. When the wrong choice had in fact been made and the fact published to the world, it is likely that Englishmen who came to hear of it, or read of it, presumed that only the substitute had been offered and had been accepted by the Raja with the full knowledge of its supposititious character. Hence the error or the unlikely element in the historical accounts.

A biography of Nubkissen would not be complete without a reference to Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings and the charge brought against him of receiving a bribe from Nubkissen. To satisfy the curious, all that Burke said is here reproduced. He opened the charge in the following terms :—

"We shall remove any degree of uneasiness from your lordships' minds and from our own, when we show you, in the charge which we shall bring before you this day, that one bribe only received by Mr. Hastings, the smallest of his bribes or nearly the smallest, the bribe received from Rajah Nobkissen, is alone more than equal to have paid all the charges Mr. Hastings is stated to have incurred." [1]

The speech on the charge runs as follows :—

"Mr. Hastings has told you that he wanted to borrow money for his own use, and that he applied to Rajah Nobkissen, who generously pressed it upon him as a gift. Rajah Nobkissen is a banyan ; you will be astonished to hear of generosity in a banyan ; there never was a banyan and generosity united together ; but Nobkissen loses his banyan qualities at once the moment the light of Mr. Hastings's face beams upon him. Here, says Mr. Hastings, I have prepared

[1] Burke at the trial of Warren Hastings. Tuesday, 21st April, 1789.

bonds for you! Astonishing! How can you think of the meanness of bonds: you call upon me to lend you £34,000 and propose bonds! No; you shall have it; you are the Governor-General, who have a large and ample salary: but I know you are a generous man, and I emulate your generosity. I give you all this money. Nobkissen was quite shocked at Mr. Hastings's offering him a bond. My lords, a Gentoo banyan is a person little lower, a little more penurious, a little more exacting, a little more cunning, a little more money-making than a Jew. There is not a Jew in the meanest corner of Duke's Place in London that is so crafty, so much a usurer, so skilful how to turn money to profit and so resolved not to give any money, but for profit, as a Gentoo broker of the class I have mentioned. But this man, however, at once grows generous, and will not suffer a bond to be given to him: and Mr. Hastings, accordingly, is thrown into very great distress."

"In every transaction of Mr. Hastings, where we have got a name there we have got a crime. Nobkissen gave him the money, and did not take his bond, I believe, for it; but Nobkissen, we find, immediately afterwards enters upon the stewardship or management of one of the most considerable districts in Bengal. We know very well, and shall prove to your lordships, in what manner such men rack such districts, and exact from the inhabitants the money to repay themselves for the bribes which had been taken from them .... And we shall prove that Nobkissen, within a year from the time when he gave this bribe, had fallen into arrears to the Company, as their steward, to the amount of a sum, the very interest of which, according to the rate of interest in that country, amounted to more than this bribe, taken, as was pretended, for the Company's service." [1]

After the defence had been made, the speech in reply was as follows:—

"In the settlement of his public account before he left India, he takes credit for a bond which he had received from Nobkissen upon some account or other. He then returns to England, and what does he do? Pay off? No. Give up the bond to the Company? No. He says, I will account to the Company for this money; and when he comes to give this account of the expenditure of this money, your lordships will not be a little astonished at the items of it. One is for founding a Mahomedan college. It is a very strange thing that Raja Nobkissen, who is a Gentoo, should be employed by Mr. Hastings to

[1] Burke's speech on the sixth charge. Tuesday, 5th May, 1789.

found a Mahomedan college. We will allow Mr. Hastings, who is a Christian, or would be thought a Christian, to grow pious at last ; and as many others have done who have spent their lives in fraud, rapacity and peculation, to seek amends, and to expiate his crimes by charitable foundations. Nay, we will suppose Mr. Hastings to have taken it into his head to turn Mahomedan (Gentoo he could not), and to have designed by a Mahomedan foundation to expiate his offences. Be it so ; but why should Nobkissen pay for it?" [1]

In answer to the accusation Warren Hastings stated as follows in his written defence :—

"The last part of the charge states that in my letter to the Court of Directors of the 21st February 1784 I have confessed to have received another sum of money, the amount of which is not declared but which from the application of it could not be less than £34,000 sterling, etc. In the year 1783, when I was actually in want of a sum of money for my private expenses, owing to the Company not having at that time sufficient cash in their treasury to pay my salary, I borrowed three lakhs of rupees of Raja Nobkissen, an inhabitant of Calcutta, whom I desired to call upon me with a bond properly filled up ; he did so, but at the time I was going to execute it he entreated I would rather accept the money than execute the bond. I neither accepted the offer, nor refused it ; and my determination upon it remained suspended between the alternative of keeping the money as a loan to be repaid and of taking it and applying it, as I had done other sums, to the Company's use ; and there the matter rested till I undertook my journey to Lucknow, when I determined to accept the money for the Company's use ; and these were my motives :—Having made disbursements from my own cash for services which though required to enable me to execute the duties of my station, I had hitherto omitted to enter into my public account, I resolved to reimburse myself in a mode most suitable to the situation of the Company's affairs, by charging these disbursements in my Durbar accounts of the present year and crediting them by a sum privately received, which was this of Nobkissen's. If my claim on the Company were not founded in justice and a *bonâ fide* one, my acceptance of three lakhs of rupees from Nobkissen by no means precludes them from recovering that sum from me. No member of this honorable House suspects me, I hope, of the meanness and guilt of presenting false accounts.

[1] Burke. Eighth day of reply. Saturday, 14th June, 1794.

In regard to this accusation, implicating both Warren Hastings and Nubkissen, it has to be observed that no proof was given in support of it; that it rested wholly on suspicion, and that eventually it fell through. The assumptions of fact made in support of the charge are wholly erroneous and unfounded. The argument for the prosecution was briefly as follows. All banyans are usurers: Nubkissen was a banyan: therefore, Nubkissen was a usurer. No usurer would lend money without a bond and without interest: Nubkissen was a usurer: therefore Nubkissen would not lend money without interest. Therefore the money he gave was a bribe. The conclusions are all logically drawn, but every one of the premises is wrong in fact. All banyans were not usurers, and Nubkissen was not "a banyan," but *the* Political Banyan. Banyans were Head Assistants, Head Clerks, Private Secretaries, or "Head Baboos" of Governors or other highly placed Englishmen. A man was never a banyan out of relation to others, and by himself. One could be a banyan only of somebody else. In a later time men carrying on particular trading or mercantile operations were called banyans, but the banyans of Nubkissen's time were only personal Assistants of this or that *Sahib*. They may have lent money, but their business was not money-lending. And Nubkissen was never a banyan of any *Sahib*. He was the Company's Political Banyan. His functions were public and political, not private and personal. The Political Banyan no more resembled the ordinary personal banyan than the Indian "Civil Service" resembles the "Home Civil Service," of which two the former means a body of rulers and judges, and the latter a body of clerks. But whatever banyans might have been or might have done, it is certain that Nubkissen was never a professional money-lender. His worst enemies have never charged him with possessing that character. From all that is known of his public life, or even of his private life, usury would seem to be

incompatible with his character. A man of imperial ambition and statesmanlike gifts, who lived in princely style, made princely donations and patronised learning and the arts, who was religious and reverential to the core of his heart, would not be likely to deal in bonds, in interest, in penalties and forfeitures. The usurer is made of far other stuff. The lion does not crawl on the earth or burrow under ground; the eagle does not hop from grass to grass.

This loan of three lakhs of rupees does not degrade Hastings, but it exalts Nubkissen. It shows the generosity of which a Hindu is capable. Probably Burke's astonishment would have been less if he had known that by the tenets of at least one oriental religion, that of Islam, the taking of interest is prohibited. Nubkissen did what was specially befitting in a Hindu of his wealth and position. Burke could not understand why a Gentoo should care to found a Mahomedan college. Here was, however, a Gentoo of a very extraordinary type. How was Burke to explain his gift of land for the erection of a Christian Church? Catholicity like Nubkissen's is rare, and it is no wonder that it elicited warm praise from the Christian community at the time. The following records [1] are a proof :—

The 8th January 1789.

TO THE PRINTER OF THE *Calcutta Gazette.*

SIR,—As the following conveys an instance of liberality and public spirit in a native of this country, which in Europe would have done honour to His Grace of Northumberland, I beg your public insertion of it as a tribute to truth and justice, and for the right information of the settlement.

I am, Sir,
Your constant reader and a subscriber,
(Signed) W. W.

[1] (Selections from the *Calcutta Gazettes* of the year, 1789 to 1797, &c., &c., &c., by W. S. Seton Karr, C. S., Vol. II, page 198).

Letter of thanks from the gentlemen of the Church Committee to Maharaja Nobkissen Bahadur of Calcutta.

SIR,

The Committee of gentlemen appointed by the Subscribers, for erecting a church to carry into effect the purposes of their subscription, have received from the Hon'ble the Governor-General and Council a copy of your durkhast, in which you give and make over to the Hon'ble Warren Hastings, Esquire, Governor-General, in order that a church may be erected thereon, six beegahs and ten biswas of land purchased by you for your own use in Calcutta.

This gift is a most liberal instance of your generosity, and has afforded to the English settlement in general a great and most seasonable aid towards giving effect to their wishes for building a place of public worship, and I am desired, Sir, to render you the thanks of the Committee for it.

I am also to acquaint you that the Hon'ble the Governor-General and Council entertain the same sense of your liberality, and have particularly marked it in a letter which they have lately written to the Hon'ble the Court of Directors.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
(Signed) BY THE SECRETARY TO THE COMMITTEE.

Nubkissen had more reason to be in sympathy with the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the Mahomedans than with that of Christians. There was no necessity in those days for founding a college for Europeans in India. The Mahomedans were backward in education and would be benefited by a college. Nubkissen was intimate with the highest Mahomedans in the land, was familiar with their court life, was in touch with their society, and, above all, was learned in their court language, Persian. Nothing so much develops sympathy with a people as knowledge of their language. The European scholar who is learned in Sanskrit or Arabic has never been known to have had any but the most kindly feelings towards the people whose classics they are. And Nubkissen as a Persian scholar might be presumed to be naturally appreciative of Mahomedan learning.

The most wonderful part of the bribe-theory is, that shortly after his advance of the three lakhs Nubkissen was appointed Sezawul of Burdwan. The story of that appointment has already been told. The appointment was no jobbery. It had become necessary in the interests of the state. There was difficulty in collecting the revenues; arrears had accumulated, and Nubkissen was universally believed to be the fittest person for the office. His success justified the choice. It was an irksome and embarrassing task that he had to perform, but he did it to the complete satisfaction of the authorities, and he ultimately resigned the office of his own free will. Probably Burke's only authority for the charge of oppression and exaction by Nubkissen as Sezawul was a statement by Mr. Peter Moore at the trial. That gentleman said: "His conduct is said to be very irregular, and his exactions very great, and it clearly appears so, from his payments being so much greater in amount the second year than they were in the first." There could not be evidence more flimsy than this. The first portion of it is only hearsay, and the rest is only a presumption arising from increased payment. Collections, however, may be made without exaction, and the only case that came to court of alleged oppression, completely broke down from want of evidence. Nubkissen had been legally armed with some powers of a coercive character for the realisation of dues, and he never appears to have exceeded those powers. The accounts that he submitted have never had their veracity questioned, and there never was any circumstance that could even raise a presumption that he had made any illicit gains by his sezawulship. Burke flung charges broadcast of which he could give no proof. No one will question or under-value his sense of justice, his love of liberty, or his sympathy with the Indian people. It is precisely those very feelings which made him so earnest in his impeachment of Hastings, and as Hastings was in his eyes a great criminal, he suspected

everybody who had done a service to that "Captain-General of Iniquity," or received a service from him. Nubkissen was tainted by an unholy association.

Nubkissen had six wives—Heramoni, Bhowani, Kunjanee, Shankari, Sukee and Bilasi. They could read and write Bengalee,—a rare accomplishment of Hindu ladies in those days. Polygamy is an institution so repugnant to the Western mind, indeed so hateful to the Western taste, in itself it is an institution so little defensible, that a word in explanation of Nubkissen's multiplicity of wives will not probably be wasted. The Hindu marriage is not a contract, but a sacrament; and the tie is indissoluble. Divorce or judicial separation is unknown. If therefore it becomes necessary, on any ground, for a man to take a second wife, while the first is alive, he has to take her in addition to the first. One of the grounds on which it may become necessary to take a second wife is the absence of a male child by the first. According to the injunctions of religion, the normal period of a Hindu's life is divided into several stages or *ásramas* as they are called. One of these is that of married life and housekeeping. It is *grihastha ásrama*. The last is the stage of retirement and religious meditation. The real, that is, the religious purpose of marriage is the birth of sons. It is the son that confers spiritual benefit on the manes of the deceased parent. It is the son that performs the *sraddha* and offers *pinda* to the departed soul. The son is the spiritual saviour of the parents, and torments are reserved in the next world for the sonless. One son at least is wanted for spiritual functions, and marriage is necessary for getting a son. All the Hindu's duties in life are regulated by religion, and a man's duty to marry arises from the necessity of having a son. If the already married wife or wives are barren or bear only females, a fresh marriage is held, onr eligious grounds, to be justifiable. Nubkissen treated all his wives well and gave them liberal allowances,

but up to a rather advanced age he had not the good fortune —for such the Hindu deems it—to be blest with a son. His last marriage, that with Srimati Bilasi Dassee, took place in 1775. Up to that year he had only a female child born (in 1772) unto Ranee Heramoni Dassee. It is true he had adopted a son, Gopi Mohan Deb, in 1768. That at any rate was stated by some witnesses before the Supreme Court of Calcutta in the suit of Gopi Mohun Deb *vs.* Raja Rajkrishna Deb Bahadur. But he had not at the date of his last marriage a son sprung from his loins. After that marriage he had two more daughters by two Ranees, and in August 1781 he had the supreme satisfaction of having a son born to him—Raja Rajkissen.

Nubkissen had a piece of ground at Ghyretty, near Chandernagore, which, though small, deserves notice for the manner in which it had come into his possession. It was contiguous to the house and gardens of Nabob Cossim Ally Khan, who had made a grant of it to Sir Eyre Coote, who commanded the Army in Bengal in 1762. That General disposed it off to Nubkissen, who had for a time some difficulty in obtaining quiet possession of the property.

Nubkissen's social leadership has been already referred to. It may be noted as a matter of detail that the Kayastha community of Calcutta had at first two divisions (दल), one led by Madan Datt and the other by Nubkissen. The division led by Nubkissen seems to have been formerly led by Kristo Churn Mitter. It rapidly grew in numbers and influence under him.

In Calcutta Nubkissen had more than once to change his residence as he advanced in life, as his family (in the Hindu sense of the word) expanded, and as his circumstances improved. Calcutta consisted originally of three villages—Sutanati, Kalikata and Govindpur. The chief of these was known as Sutanati Hat, literally "Cotton Thread Mart." It grew up on the eastern bank of

the river for the sale of country-made yarns and cloths.[1] "Sobhabazar was then a jungle, though when Nobokissen, Clive's Munshi, settled there after the battle of Plassey, it rose rapidly in buildings and population. Mention is made of it in 1780 as frequented by sailors and of a great fire having occurred there when Jack was very active in rescuing the natives' property from the flames."[2] It was Nubkissen that made Sobhabazar. A word may be said about the name Sobhabazar. There have been learned discussions about its origin. It has been said by some that it means literally a bazar of beauty and is derived from the Bengalee words শোভা and বাজার. By others it has been traced to the words সভা and বাজার and has been taken to mean the locality where the great gathering or সভা on the occasion of the *sraddha* of Nubkissen's mother was held. It is easy to see from several records that have been quoted that both these etymologies are wrong, that the name was originally written as Soubah Bazar which explains itself. Sham Bazar appears to have been Charles's Bazar. Some of the localities known as "bazars" appear to have been called by the names of particular Englishmen. "The house generally known by the name of Sankar Ghosh's is the *paitric* or family inheritance which on the death of their mother devolved on the three brothers, the said Raja Navakrishna, Ram Soonder and Manik Chunder; and that people do generally call the house *Chota Baree* and *Puratan Baree*. That the western wing or range of apartments of that house was formerly occupied by Maharaja Navakissen before he had built and removed to another house on the Seat's ground called *Burra Baree*."[3] "The families of Ramsoonder Bewarta,

[1] See *History of British India* by Sir W. W. Hunter, I, page 225.

[2] *Peeps into Social Life in Calcutta, a century ago.* By the Rev. J. Long, page 8.

[3] Deposition of Radhamohun Ghose in *Gopimohun Deb* vs. *Raja Rajkrishna Deb Bahadur*.

Manick Chandra Bewarta and Raja Nubkissen all dined or messed together until the year 1180 (B.S.) when in consequence of the increase of members in each family they found it inconvenient to continue this practice any longer and accordingly agreed to dine separately, each in his own apartments. That Raja Nubkissen also lived in apartments allotted to him in the *paitric*, or family house which he had enlarged by purchasing ground adjoining to it and erecting other buildings and joining them to his side of the apartments in the *paitric* house.[1]" "The house in which Ramsoonder Bewarta and his family lived was built by Raja Nubkissen; but the ground on which it was built was purchased by the mother of Nubkissen.[2]" Nubkissen began to build a *Thakoorbaree*, but death prevented him from completing it. After his death Raja Raj Kissen pulled down some parts of the structure and rebuilt it on a different plan. It was intended to be dedicated to the service of Gopinathji and Govindji. It was the wish of Maharaja Nubkissen that the sum of Rs. 50,000 should be spent on the building. In 1789 the Maharaja with his wife Sukee Dasse and his son Rajkissen retired from the old family house to the new house, taking with him the greatest part of his moveable property. The other members of his family and the remaining wives of the Maharaja remained with Gopimohun Deb in the old family house. Nubkissen made his last will on the 13th May 1791 and died on the 22nd November 1797, corresponding with the 10th of Agrahayan, 1204 (B.S.)

A brief reference to some of the most conspicuous men that lived in or about the time of Nubkissen will not be out of place. Maharaja Doorlub Roy enjoyed the highest distinction and power at the Court of Seraj-ud-Dowlah before Lord Clive had set foot in Bengal. He was the first lord of the Treasury and maintained no inconsiderable army

[1] Deposition of Kristo Mohun Deb.

[2] Deposition of Mohon Lall Bose.

of his own to support his dignity and to shield himself from danger. He commanded the troops which were sent to the encampment at Plassey though he does not appear to have been engaged in that battle. Under Meer Jaffer, he still continued to preside over the exchequer; and so great was his wealth, that the Nabob and his execrable son, Meeran, employed every engine of Government for more than a twelve-month to pillage and destroy him; and this they would have inevitably effected but for the active interference of Clive.[1]

Maharaja Shetab Roy was one of the Ministers at the Court of Moorshedabad, where he appears to have held a command in the army. He was the only Hindoo of Bengal who in that stirring period exhibited the faintest spark of military courage. We find him commanding a body of native troops in the battle which Knox fought under the walls of Patna in 1759; and the English commander bore the most honorable testimony to his boldness and skill. The author of the Seer Mutakhereen, who witnessed the battle from the walls of the city, says: "Knox came in the evening, with Shetab Roy in his company. They were both covered with dust—and sweat. The Captain passed the greatest encomiums on Shetab Roy's zeal, activity and valour. He exclaimed several times, 'This is a real Nabob. I never saw such a Nabob in all my life.'" After the acquisition of the Dewanny by the English, he was associated with Mahomed Reza Khan in the management of the finances.[2]

The Setts of Moorshedabad are too well known to need any detailed notice. They were the imperial bankers for the three provinces;—second in importance only to the Soobadar himself. No political event transpired during the fifty years preceding the downfall of the Mahomedans in which they did not bear a prominent share. It was of them that Burke said in the House of Commons that their

[1] *The Friend of India.* 1838.
[2] *Ditto.*

transactions were as extensive as those of the Bank of England. It was in consequence of the vast power which their commercial negociations gave them, that they received from Delhi the title of "Jugut Sett" or the Bankers of the world. Cossim Aly put two of the brothers to death in his flight to Monghyr, and the transfer of the Exchequer from Moorshedabad to Calcutta completed their decay.[1]

Rajah Raj Bullub was selected for his talents as the Naib or Deputy Governor of the province of Dacca by Aly Verdy, twenty years before the journey of Lord Clive to the Upper Provinces. A few months before the death of Aly Verdy, Raj Bullub's master, the Governor of Dacca, paid the debt of nature. Aly Verdy, then eighty years of age, was lying on the couch from which he never rose, and Seraj-ud-Dowlah, his profligate grandson, seized the helm before he had breathed his last, and proceeded forthwith to imprison Raj Bullub, who happened to be at Moorshedabad, that he might press out of the sponge some portion of the wealth which had been absorbed in the long administration of a wealthy province. Kissen Das, Raj Bullub's son, on hearing of his father's confinement, immediately embarked with his family and the immense wealth which his father had accumulated, and under pretence of going on a pilgrimage to Juggernath, stopped at Calcutta, where he obtained refuge. It was chagrin at the escape of so much wealth from his hands, that induced Suraj-ud-Dowlah, as soon as he had ascended the throne, to march down and attack Calcutta in 1756. But such is the caprice of power, that the young Soobadar had no sooner entered Fort William than he ordered his palanqueen to be set down in the square, and commanding Kissen Dass to be brought before him, bestowed an honorary dress on him! Within three hours after this event commenced the tragedy of the Black Hole. [2]

[1] *The Friend of India*, 1838.
[2] *Ditto.*

RESIDENCE OF MAHARAJA NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.—SOUTH RANGE.

Nubkissen's career, as has been shown, was unique. "Navakrishna was a representative man. In himself he holds up to us the mirror of his age. He lived in one of the most important and critical periods of our history—to some extent he acted that history. He was one of the leaders of our revolution, a revolution little less glorious and momentous in its results than the English Revolution of 1688, and his never-failing fidelity to the English shows that he was immeasureably above his age in political sagacity and perhaps too that he was warmed by a degree of patriotism. But he possesses a greater historical interest. With him passed away the generation of natives who held the highest posts under the English in India and exercised power and influence little inferior to the Governor-General."[1]

[1] *Mookerjee's Magazine.* April 1861.

CHAPTER XI.

NUBKISSEN AND THE ENGLISH CONQUEST.

SCARCELY any nation in the world has followed, as closely or as consistently as the English, the principles which were laid down by a great English philosopher and man of the world, in regard to the use that rulers have to make of their counsellors and the degree of public recognition that is to be given to them. Bacon wrote :—"The ancient times do set forth in figure both the incorporation and inseparable conjunction of Counsel with Kings, and the wise and politic use of Counsel by Kings : the one, in that they say Jupiter did marry Metis, which signifieth Counsel ; whereby they intend that sovereignty is married to Counsel ; the other, in that which followeth, which was thus : they say, after Jupiter was married to Metis, she conceived by him and was with child ; but Jupiter suffered not to stay till she brought forth, but ate her up : whereby he became himself with child, and was delivered of Pallas armed, out of his head. Which monstrous fable containeth a secret of empire, how Kings are to make use of their council of state ; that first, they ought to refer matters unto them (which is the first begetting or impregnation) ; but when they are elaborate, moulded, and shaped in the womb of their Council, and grow ripe and ready to be brought forth, that then they suffer not their Council to go through with the resolution and direction, as if it depended on them, but take the matter back into their own hands, and make it appear to the world that the decrees and final directions (which, because they come forth with prudence and power are resembled to Pallas armed) proceeded from themselves, and not only from their authority, but (the more to add reputation to themselves) from their head and device."

In this respect Englishmen have been Baconians before Bacon. They have always known how to refer matters unto

counsellors, and, when they have been "elaborate, moulded and shaped," to take the matter back into their own hands and make it appear to the world that the decrees and final directions proceeded from themselves, "and not only from their authority but from their head and device." And whether formally initiated in these principles or not, they have invariably acted according to them by a sort of instinct in administering the affairs of this country. They have observed those principles most systematically in dealing with native Counsellors. The native of India is indispensable to the ruler. Often he is his best adviser, his only informant He not only carries his master's messages or obeys his orders, but warns him, instructs him, fights his battles, saves his life or honour, and even governs for him. But the native, whatever his services, receives as little recognition in any history of India as the American in a history of English literature. The country is studded with memorials of Englishmen who in civil or military life have in any way aided in the establishment or maintenance of British rule, but material monuments or historical notices of native helpers of the English cause are hard to find. Need we wonder at the omission of native names from works by Englishmen, when there is scarcely a history of India or even a biography of Clive or Hastings that mentions even Maharaja Nubkissen who was the friend, philosopher and guide of the hero of Plassey, and to whom the English are indebted for services which can scarcely be repaid ? The English habit is never to recognise the individuality of the native, but always to merge him in some Englishman or other. The Englishman by virtue of his position in India is always the superior officer. Some subordinate may not only be his right hand but his brain, but authority takes precedence of ability, the subordinate is sunk in the superior, and though a resolution in a gazette may bestow compliments on a few fortunate natives, the writers of the more elaborate official documents or books of history do not seem to think it worth their while

to disfigure their pages by native names. The history of India, as written by Englishmen—and no others care to write it—is a history of English soldiers and English rulers. Which history of India during the Mutinies mentions Hurrish Chunder Mookerjea, and yet who could be more fitly called the right hand of Lord Canning at the time?

"The most wonderful things," says Burke, "are brought about in many instances by means the most absurd and ridiculous; in the most ridiculous modes; and, apparently, by the most contemptible instruments." Again: "It is often impossible, in these political enquiries, to find any proportion between the apparent force of any moral causes we may assign, and their known operation.....A common soldier, a child, a girl at the door of an inn, have changed the face of fortune, and almost of Nature." Nubkissen rendered services to the founders of the English Empire in the East which certainly make him out to be an "instrument." He was no "contemptible instrument" however, for his services were not merely of the mechanical, accidental sort. They were not confined to any special, single occasion. They are not to be compared to the guarding of a gate or the defence of a bridge. They were systematic, long-continued and deliberate, giving evidence of various intellectual and moral qualities. He was an instrument in the same sense in which Clive was himself an instrument. Both were founders of the empire, the one by his sword, the other by his diplomacy. As has been observed in a previous chapter, the inspiration of empire came into the soldier's mind from the diplomat. Both were alike instruments, for neither was, by his birth, education or surroundings, drawn in any necessary way to imperial tactics. Neither had received any training for his work, yet each was fittest, among the men of the time, for the purpose he accomplished.

The English acquisition of India is one of the most marvellous facts of history. The circumstances that led to

the establishment of the English power and the character of the revolution that was accomplished, have been described with remarkable accuracy and soundness of judgment by Profesor Seeley. "Our acquisition of India," writes the learned historian, "was made blindly. Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally as the conquest of India. There has indeed been little enough of calculation or contrivance in our colonisation. When our first settlers went out to Virginia and New England, it was not intended to lay the foundations of a mighty republican state. But here the event has differed from the design only in degree. We did intend to establish a new community, and we even knew it would be republican in its tendency; what was hidden from us was only its immense magnitude. But in India we meant one thing, and did quite another. Our object was trade, and in this we were not particularly successful. War with the native states we did not think of at all till a hundred years after our first settlement, and then we thought only of such war as might support our trade; after this time again more than half a century passed before we thought of any considerable territorial acquisitions; the nineteenth century had almost begun before the policy of acquiring an ascendency over the native states was entered upon; and our present supreme position cannot be said to have been attained before the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie, little more than a quarter of a century ago. All along we have been looking one way and moving another."

What was the condition of the country at the time the English came into power? Let the historian answer:—"When we began to take possession of the country, it was already in a state of wild anarchy, such as Europe perhaps has never known. What government it had was pretty invariably despotic, and was generally in the hands of military adventurers, depending on a soldiery composed of bandits

whose whole vocation was plunder. The Mahratta Power covered the greater part of India and threatened at once Delhi and Calcutta, while it had its head-quarters at Poonah, and yet this power was but an organisation of pillage. Meanwhile in the North Nadir Shah rivalled Attila or Tamerlane in his devastating expeditions. It may be said this was only a passing anarchy produced by the dissolution of the Mogul Empire. Even so, it would show that India is not a country which can endure the withdrawal of Government. But have we not a somewhat exaggerated idea of the Mogul Empire? Its greatness was extremely short-lived, and in the Deccan it seems never really to have established itself. The anarchy which Clive and Hastings found in India was not so exceptional a state of things as it might seem. Probably it was much more intense at that moment than ever before, but a condition of anarchy seems almost to have been chronic in India since Mahmoud, and to have been but suspended for a while in the Northern half by Akber and Shah Jehan."

India, Professor Seeley goes on to say, was never conquered by the English. The word "conquest" refers to some action done to one state by another. There is war between two states; the army of the one state invades the other and overturns the government of it, or, at least, forces the government to such humiliating terms, that it is practically deprived of its independence. Nothing of this sort happened between England and India. India had no nationality, the people had no national feeling, and Indian powers were overthrown by the aid of the Indians themselves. "Now this is not a foreign conquest, but rather an internal revolution. In any country when government breaks down and anarchy sets in, the general law is that a struggle follows between such organised powers as remain in the country, and that the most powerful of these sets up a government. In France, for instance, after the fall of the House of Bourbon in 1792 a new

government was set up chiefly through the influence of the Municipality of Paris ; this Government having fallen into discredit a few years later was superseded by a military Government wielded by Bonaparte. Now India about 1750 was in a condition of anarchy caused by a decay in the Mogul Empire which had begun at the death of Aurungzebe in 1707. The imperial authority having everywhere lost its force over so vast a territory, the general law began to operate. Everywhere the minor organised powers began to make themselves supreme. These powers, after the fashion of India, were most commonly mercenary bands of soldiers, commanded either by some provincial governor of the falling empire, or by some adventurer who seized an opportunity of rising to the command of them, or, lastly, by some local power which had existed before the establishment of the Mogul supremacy and had never completely yielded to it. To give an example of each kind of power, the state of Hyderabad was founded by the satrap of the great Mogul called the Nizam, the state of Mysore was founded by the Mussulman adventurer Hyder Ali, who rose from the ranks by mere military ability, the great Mahratta confederacy of chieftains headed by the Peishwa, a Brahminical not a Mussulman Power, represented the older India of the time before the Mogul. But all these powers alike subsisted by means of mercenary armies, they lived in a state of chronic war and mutual plunder such as, I suppose, has hardly been witnessed in Europe except perhaps in the dissolution of the Carlovingian Empire."

Macaulay, who belongs to a very different school, comes to the same conclusion as Professor Seeley in regard to the political situation in India at the time that Nubkissen lived and worked. He writes :- "The history of the successors of Theodosius bears no small analogy to that of the successors of Aurungzebe. But perhaps the fall of the Carlovingians furnishes the nearest parallel to the fall of the Moguls.....

A succession of nominal sovereigns, sunk in indolence and debauchery, sauntered away life in secluded palaces, chewing bang, fondling concubines, and listening to buffoons. A succession of ferocious invaders descended through the Western passes to prey on the defenceless wealth of Hindostan...Wherever the Viceroys of the Mogul retained authority they became sovereigns. They might still acknowledge in words the superiority of the house of Tamerlane ; as a Count of Flanders or a Duke of Burgundy might have acknowledged the superiority of the most helpless driveller among the later Carlovingians. They might occasionally send to their titular sovereign a complimentary present, or solicit from him a title of honour. In truth, however, they were no longer Lieutenants removable at pleasure, but independent hereditary princes. In this way originated those great Mussulman houses which formerly ruled Bengal and the Carnatic, and those which still, though in a state of vassalage, exercise some of the powers of royalty at Lucknow and Hyderabad. In what was this confusion to end? Was the strife to continue during centuries? Was it to terminate in the rise of another great monarchy? Was the Mussulman or the Mahratta to be the Lord of India? Was another Baber to descend from the mountains and to lead the hardy tribes of Cabul and Chorasan against a wealthier and less warlike race? None of these events seemed improbable."

What learned historians have been able to observe after a long and careful observation Nubkissen saw at once with the shrewd eye of a practical statesman. His attachment to the English was formed, as has been seen, not after the Company had acquired power and importance, but in the days of their helplessness and depression. Persecuted, expelled from the town, and driven to take secret refuge on the banks of the river at Fulta, they received information, provisions and other assistance from none but Nubkissen. At unspeakable risk to himself he came to their aid. As

his relations with the Company became more intimate and his insight into English character deeper, the sentimental attachment ripened into a genuine esteem. He came to be convinced of the strength, the talents, the righteousness of the small band of foreigners. When false charges were brought against him they were inquired into with scrupulous care and pronounced to be false. When by an error of the authorities, rights to certain lands were conferred on him which legally belonged to another, and a complaint was made by that person, the grant was revoked after a due inquiry and compensation made. In spite of their feelings of kindness towards him and their appreciation of his services, they administered strict justice between him and a stranger. The recorded examples of English firmness, courage and justice are as nothing compared to the many experiences which Nubkissen must have had in his daily relations with them. The edifice of Mahomedan supremacy was crumbling and it was hopeless to buttress it up. It was suffering not from the violence of a sudden shock, but from the dry rot which nothing could cure, and the inevitable consequences of which were decay and ruin. The soul had departed from the rule with the justice of Akber. Righteousness exalteth a nation. It alone sanctifies a rule. Aurungzebe substituted force for justice, and though the strength of his military arm kept up a good show as long as he lived, the handwriting on the wall had already manifested itself. The tottering frame lingered on through a few more reigns, but its doom had been sealed by the policy of reaction which had commenced. The Hindu power was extinct beyond the hope of a revival. The scattered forces were not strong enough, and they wanted coherence and a leader. There were no materials in the country out of which a new order could be evoked. The deliverance was provided from a foreign source.

Nubkissen, so far as he helped the consummation, did so out of the same necessity which compelled Englishmen to

invite William of Orange to occupy the throne rendered vacant by the constructive abdication of James II. An independent, patriotic, homogeneous nation like the English had in the circumstances of that epoch no alternative but to look to a foreign source for relief from the threatening anarchy. The necessity was clearer in India in the circumstances of the times in which Nubkissen lived.

The hand of Providence is no mere metaphor. The more closely we look into the lives of individuals and nations and into the way in which epoch-making events occur, the more are we liable to be convinced that a force not ourselves rules the affairs of men. It is not a blind force, but a Will. And it is a Will that is not capricious, but that operates through, if it is not identified with, a Law which is the very standard and type of Righteousness. There have been some times palpable manifestations of the Will. What was that fairy-like female figure that stimulated to heroic exertion the Greek seamen whose arms were faltering at the commencement of the battle of Salamis? It seems easy for a certain class of thinkers to dispose of, on *à priori* grounds, all such incidents or reports as fiction. If properly examined they cannot be lightly dismissed; and their number is not insignificant. What theory of natural causation or necessary law will explain the visions that Joan of Arc saw, the capacities she suddenly acquired, the results she achieved? How did the simple village girl come to be a commander of armies and the winner of battles against veterans? It is worthy of note that several of the most remarkable men of history, men whom the world is content to credit with extraordinary merits as the real cause of their achievements, felt themselves to be nothing more than the instruments of a Divine Purpose. The English commanders who put the Spanish Armada to flight deserve credit no doubt for their courage and strategy, but several of them were conscious of the help they received from the elements, and the Sovereigns

concerned saw and felt deeper. Philip II. said that he had never counted on being called upon to fight God and man, and Queen Elizabeth, neither imbecile in intellect, nor unwilling to claim credit for her officers, expressed her conviction in the memorable words of her medal.

Of Cromwell's faith the evidence is overwhelming. In his despatch addressed to the speaker of the House of Commons after the battle of Naseby he writes :—"This is none other but the hand of God, and to Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him." Again : "Thus I have given you a true, but not a full account of this great business ; wherein he that runs may read, that all this is none other than the work of God. He must be a very Atheist who does not acknowledge it." "Sir," he wrote on the battle field of Preston, "this is nothing but the hand of God." Writing to Colonel Hammond in November 1648 he notices his own victories in the following terms :—"We have not been without our share of beholding some remarkable providences and appearances of the Lord." "My dear friend," he goes on, "let us look into providences ; surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together ; have been so constant, so clear, unclouded." Referring to the 3rd September 1651 he says in a despatch :—"This day twelvemonth was glorious at Dunbar, this day hath been glorious at Worcester. The word then was '*The Lord of Hosts*' and so it was now ; and indeed the Lord of Hosts was wonderfully with us." Are assertions like these to be taken in a conventional sense, as the expression of a mere ceremonial humility ? Most emphatically no. They represent his deepest convictions. They were the result of his inspirations and experiences. His contemporary, Milton, whose lot was cast in another sphere of life, felt like him that he was working ever under the Taskmaster's eye, and was conscious, from an early period, of his being destined to leave some work that posterity would not willingly let die. Napoleon's faith in the occult arts or, rather,

in the occult forces of nature has become proverbial. He said on a certain occasion, "My presentiments have never deceived me." Presentiments are inspirations and not the results of experience. But experience has often tended to confirm antecedent faith. The circumstances under which William III. landed in England convinced him that Providence had directed his movements for the deliverance of the English people.

As God is the one Cause of the universe, His is the one Purpose which rules in life. The Divine Will does not destroy human freedom, but directs it. Some of the greatest of men have felt this guidance and have regarded themselves as favoured and glorified by it. When three successive attempts to commit suicide failed, Clive is said to have observed that he must be reserved for something great. He may have had no direct inspiration, but in nearly every military operation in which he was engaged he was helped by "accidents." The so-called accidents play a great part in life, but what the vulgar judgment regards as an accident is often only a special dispensation of Providence. The world is not ruled by accidents, nor by physical force, nor by law if it means mechanical necessity or arbitrary sequence. "Through the ages an increasing purpose runs." And if at times falsehood seems to triumph over truth, or right to give way to might, the fact is to be regarded in no other light than the sufferings, in private life, of a righteous man or the prosperity of a rogue. Unseen conditions are at work which interfere with a proper reading of the facts, and it has to be remembered that for the settlement of accounts there is all eternity at the disposal of the Most High. "The Moral Law is written on the tablets of eternity." In accordance with that law great men (or women) arise for the deliverance—political, intellectual or religious—of mankind or a section of it. These persons, whether political rulers or not, are possessed of a true Divine Right. They are instruments of the Divine Will. Their ability gives them only fitness as

instruments. The circumstances which conduce to the success of their mission are moulded by an unseen hand. And there is a Divinity that shapes their ends.

The English conquest of India, if conquest it can be called, is, more than any other event of equal importance, a Divine dispensation. There was a manifest disproportion between means and results. The unexpected happened every day during the period of transition. The old *régime* passed away like the baseless fabric of a vision. Armies and empires seemed to melt into thin air before the very eyes of men. The English came into the country as traders; they found themselves rulers. Clive's triumphs have a magical character about them, almost as marked as those of La Pucelle. They read like fable. The English did not fight their way to the *musnud*, but were wafted to it as by a propitious breeze, of which none can say whence came it or how blew it.

Nubkissen was carried along the tide; at the same time he was one of the chief forces that contributed to the consummation. Posterity has no reason to regret his policy or his actions; on the contrary, it should be grateful for his services. Experience had shown that not only no indigenous power was fitted to restore peace, order and good government to the country, but that no western power except the English was equal to the task. It was not superior strength so much as superior wisdom and justice which placed the country in the hands of the English. Strength would have been displayed in conquest, but the English obtained their power not so much by conquest as by cession and agreement. English management of possessions was often welcomed by powers and peoples.

The empire which was acquired by wisdom and justice will be retained by the same qualities and by them alone. Justice even more than wisdom is the strength of a Government, and when it fails, the powers of righteousness make it go. The heavens themselves "arm against perjured kings." There

comes a time when the load of iniquity is too heavy to be borne and the empire sinks under the weight. It is difficult to conceive even the possibility of English rulers abandoning justice or lowering the standard of it. The Proclamation made by Her late Majesty Queen Victoria in November 1858, on assuming the direct sovereignty of India, is a remarkable document for its pronounced and emphatic affirmation of principles of justice,—equal rights, religious toleration, a fair field to intelligence and character. That Proclamation cannot fail to be a perpetual guide to Indian rulers. At any rate, it will always remain as an ideal which Governments, in spite of occasional lapses, will generally strive to realise.

There is no fear of any honest-minded ruler going wrong if he remembers the principles of that charter, and if in carrying out innovations he follows the method which in England has proved so successful, the method not of Revolutions but of Evolution. About the worst evil of foreign rule is its tendency to arrest the natural and spontaneous development of a people. Not all the imported blessings that a conquering race can offer, can compensate for the loss of a healthy, natural growth. Art never supplies the want of Life. England cannot be charged with any conscious attempt to interfere with the free development of the intelligence, the character and the institutions of the Indian people; on the contrary, she deserves their gratitude for her endeavours to aid that development. Some deterioration may arise, however, in consequence of the inevitable conditions of the new life. At least one such instance was discovered long ago. A remarkable passage occurs in a minute by Philip Francis recorded in the proceedings (Public Department) of the 4th November 1776, and said to be "in consequence of the Governor-General's minute of the 28th April last on the subject of the trade to Suez." It runs :—

"The consumption of foreign commodities by the natives of Bengal is very inconsiderable. Cotton, the chief article of import, is

the material of manufacture for exportation. But the productions of Bengal have been in request in almost every part of the world. The returns were received in specie. The parsimonious industry of a simple unenlightened people imposed a natural tribute on the indolence or luxury of the most powerful and polished nations. In these circumstances the growing balance of trade accumulated and the country flourished under a despotic Government.

"It is material to the present inquiry to observe that there is no period of time at which the foreign trade has been conducted by any but foreigners; consequently its continuing to be so is not an assignable cause of the decline of the country. The Hindu is attached to the soil which gave him birth, by the plan and principle of his religion. Nothing but external violence can remove him from it. Nature has encouraged him by every prospect of advantage to be a husbandman or a manufacturer. It is no more compatible with his interest than with his genius, constitution and habits of life to be a mariner, or an adventurer, in the retail of commerce. The foreigner must come home to him and purchase at his door. In this sense, if *selling* be the essential property of commerce, Bengal was a commercial nation of the first order; other nations were but the agents of her fundamental industry and the retailers of her original produce. Before the introduction of the British dominion, these were truths unquestionable. The wonderful mass of wealth we found here proves without argument the actual lenity of the ancient Government and the simple unerring wisdom of its institutors. Bengal has changed its masters: does this single change, or any consequences attending it, imply a necessity of altering the whole political and economical system under which it formerly prospered? . . . The happiness of a nation—connected, perhaps, with prejudices and indifferent to the Governing Power—their long-established constitution, is a dangerous subject for political experiments. The object wastes under the attempt to improve." . . . .

The evil referred to is serious. There are reasons to fear that similar other evils may have arisen in spite of the intention of the Government and the people to avert them. It is not easy to prevent by conscious effort the operation of social and economic laws. It is enough if Development—and Progress has no better meaning than as the development of Order—is steadily kept in view as the end. Education is

another name for development, and if England's mission to the East is to be described in one word, it is education. The education which the country expects at the hands of Government is twofold. It is, first, an intellectual training, such as is given and received in academies of various kinds, literary, or technical, and, secondly, it is political and civic education, which can be given and received only through political institutions by the exercise of rights and the discharge of duties. Self-Government and Trial by Jury are institutions which have their value in this country, not so much as satisfying popular demands as tending to educate the people.

India has been learning much from her western rulers and has still a great deal to learn. She has to acquire the treasures of western science and the methods of science. She has to learn the value of order and system, of classification and analysis, of criticism and questioning. She has to acquire the scientific spirit. She has to acquire the western arts of political life, the arts of organisation, the western notions of individual right, of public duty, of the responsibilities of power and wealth, of legal and political equality. She has to acquire the western virtues of industry and self-reliance. But she has not only to receive, but to give, and there is a great deal that she is very well fitted to give. The East has always been the spiritual instructor of the West, and her occupation is not yet gone.

The East is the land not of mere asceticism, but of every form and variety of spiritual thought. "Thought" is probably not the correct word. This land of the sun is pre-eminently the land of Vision, Revelation, Ecstasy. It is the land of seers and saints. In contrasting the European and Asiatic temperaments Mr. Meredith Townsend observes:—"The truth is the European is essentially secular—that is, intent on securing objects he can see; and the Asiatic essentially religious—that is, intent on obedience to powers which he cannot see, but can imagine." He is essentially right, but

the Asiatic claims that the powers he obeys can not only be imagined by him, but are, as he thinks, often seen by him. The visions of the forms in which the Deity is believed to have manifested Himself, are, very largely at any rate, the origin of the idolatry which prevails. It is no information to the Hindu that God is one, but he believes that this one God is not only present in everything but has manifested Himself in many forms, and he therefore thinks it fitting to worship Him in one or other of these forms. Hinduism does not mean idolatry, ritual and polygamy, any more than Christianity means courtship, divorce, re-marriage of divorced wives, frauds in diplomacy and brutality in war. No religion ought to be judged by the behaviour in private or social life of its latter-day votaries. The purest metals are covered with dross or rust in course of time ; and actual life seldom illustrates ideals.

The prospect of the Hindu race is uncertain, even gloomy. It will receive no recruits from other religions, but can lose members to them. It will be extinct by the disintegration of its society. Union by marriage with any other race will also tend to extinguish it. Instead of acquiring greater coherence every day and tending to national unity, it is splitting up into more and more classes and sects. The breeze of materialism has been unsettling the minds of men and disturbing their faith through western learning and contact with western life. In the absence of a Hindu *régime* there are no agencies possessed either of moral or civic power for effecting the needful reforms, re-adjusting society, evoking order out of chaos and breathing new life into the Hindu people. Regeneration appears to be impossible, dissolution pretty certain. What then is the hope of the Hindu ? Scarcely anything but this, that the creed which dies with the Hindu may live on in the European. If the Hindus, before they pass away, can communicate to some at least of the sons of the West all that is best in their religion, their philosophy and their

ideals of life, they may die content. The principles, the ideas, the habits will remain ; their possessors alone will be changed. The new possessors will probably cherish them with more earnestness, defend them with greater zeal and energy, develop and propagate them in a more effective way. The hope of the devout Hindu is in the European. He may well fear that he will leave no other heir in the spiritual sphere.

There is little in the way of moral principles that the Hindu has to teach to the European. But Hinduism is not only a code of morals, but an interpretation of the unseen. It has something very distinctive to tell us about man's origin and destiny ; it points out to us the means of getting at spiritual realities, and of placing ourselves in contact with the world beyond this. The Hindu's faith is based not so much on the scriptures as on experience—on inspiration, on vision, on positive proofs of the Divine will. The Hindu Yogi or Sannyasi is the mainstay of the Hindu religion. It is he that accounts for the wonderful vitality of the Hindu creed. For, quite independently of the scriptures, it is he that has given proofs, from generation to generation, of direct relations between God and man. He is a living proof himself, of the possibility, by the Hindu method, of knowing God, of ascertaining His will and receiving His favours. Daily proofs are given in this land, of the reality of the Hindu faith, of the efficacy of Hindu worship, prayer and devotion. The Hindu, therefore, does not very much care to discuss his faith with others, for he does not rest his faith merely on authority or logic. He may lose many a battle on the logical arena and yet his faith is unshaken, for he cannot get rid of the personal experiences of himself or of others that he comes in contact with. His sheet anchor is not a single ancient Revelation, but daily and hourly revelations on many an occasion of danger, difficulty and doubt. His scriptures are a guide for the solution of difficulties of a metaphysical or theological kind, but his

chief resource and consolation is in the exploration of the occult.

He does not claim a monopoly of Divine favour or of the capacity of holding communion with the Divine. If others share the advantages he will not be jealous. It is enough for him as a member of a dependent, despised, and materially backward race to vindicate his own position as a seeker of spiritual truth. And he can only regret the course of thought by which, in other countries than his own, the spiritual adept, the open-eyed seer, the recipient of inspiration, should have come to be called a mystic.

Hinduism as a religion is not so much a creed as a capacity, not so much a doctrine as a discipline. Hence is bound up with it a system for the regulation of life. If the discipline and the capacity could be communicated to the sons of the West, the Hindus would be glad to hand down to them their country and their traditions. While they themselves would be advancing in objectivity and industrialism, the balance of the world's forces would be maintained by the communication of their inwardness and delicacy of spiritual fibre to the Aryans of another clime. Already the Eastern light has penetrated and illumined a few select minds in England, on the western continent, and even in the New World, and if over-crowded England should ever establish a colony in this land, the exchange of services between the East and the West would receive signal facilities. A colony is not essential, however, for the communication of influences. Even under existing conditions the forces of Europe and Asia would act on each other. The Asiatic would be secularised, the European would be spiritualised. The education of both would be complete, for the truest culture is that which does not over-weight the existing capacities, but supplies their defects. And not till that education has come about, can the mission of the English Conquest be taken as realised. The Hindu may be pardoned if he flatters himself that it was

a providential regard for Hindu interests that made Britain's banners float on Indian soil. He would have been swept away under the old rule ; he was saved under the new. God had listened to his prayers. And if he was coming to be feeble and his society effete, the same benign Destiny also provided that all that was best and highest in his creed, his constitution and his life, would pass, before his extinction, to a new, more healthy and more vigorous race, better fitted to keep it alive. His creed and his country had been saved, and he might well be persuaded that the political revolution that he had lived to witness was one more triumph of his religion.

RAJA BINAYA KRISHNA, K-i-H.

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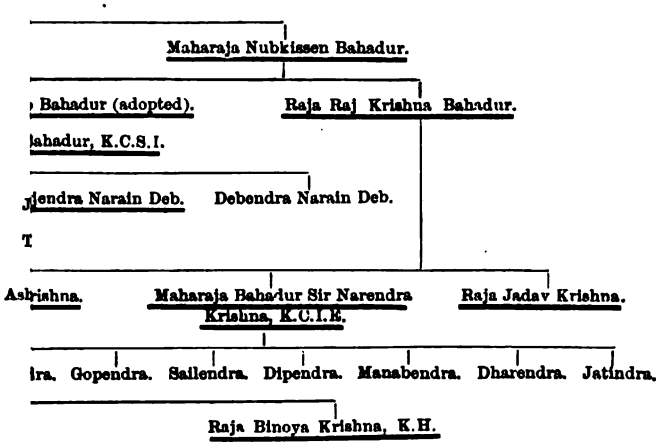
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Dharendra.
Jatindra.
Raja Binoya Krishna, K.H.

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